BBC

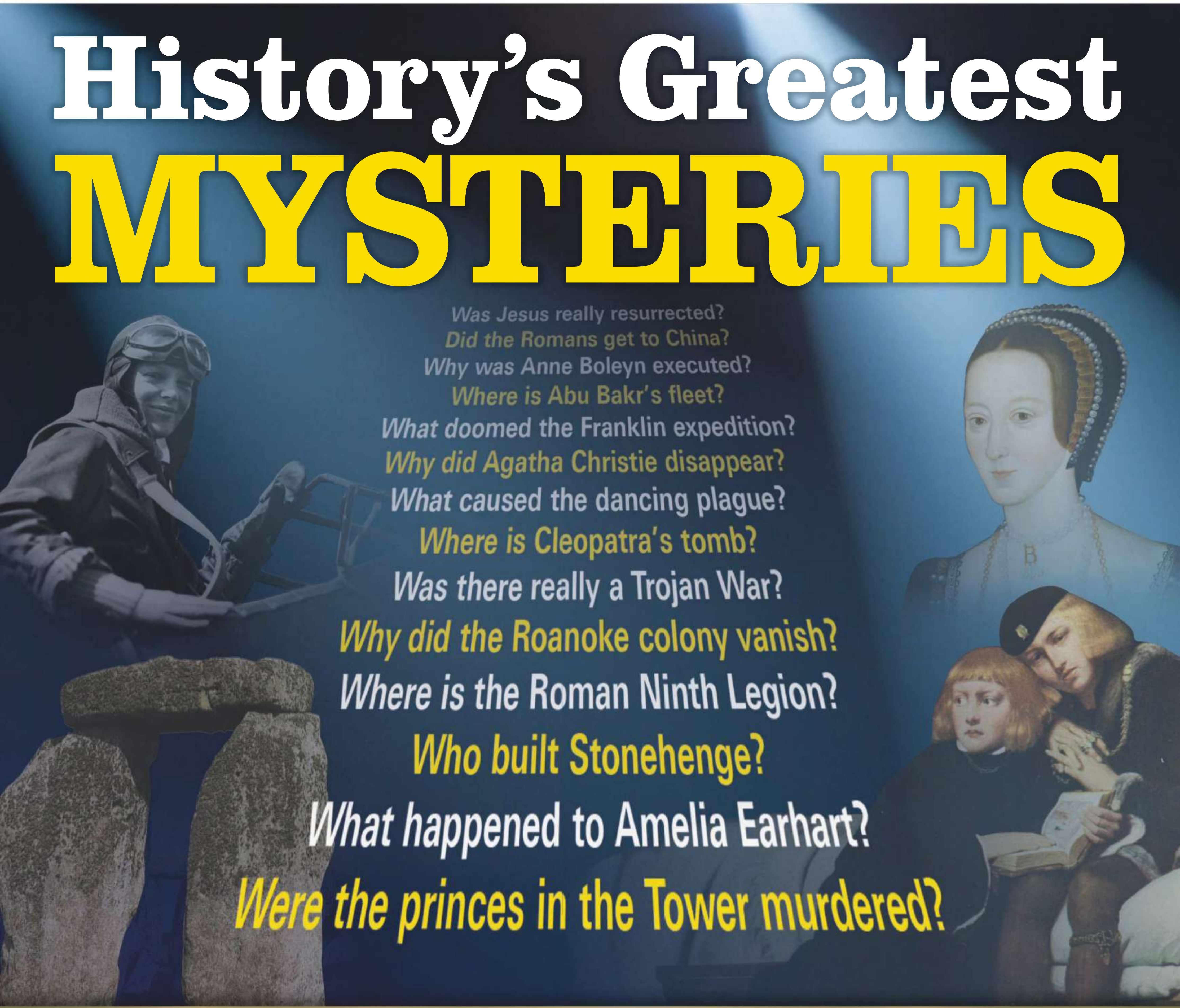
HILARY MANTEL ON CROMWELL'S DOWNFALL
"The next crisis is never more than a heartbeat away"

HISTORY

20th Anniversary Special

BRITAIN'S BESTSELLING HISTORY MAGAZINE
£5.50 / June 2020 / www.historyextra.com

History's Greatest MYSTERIES



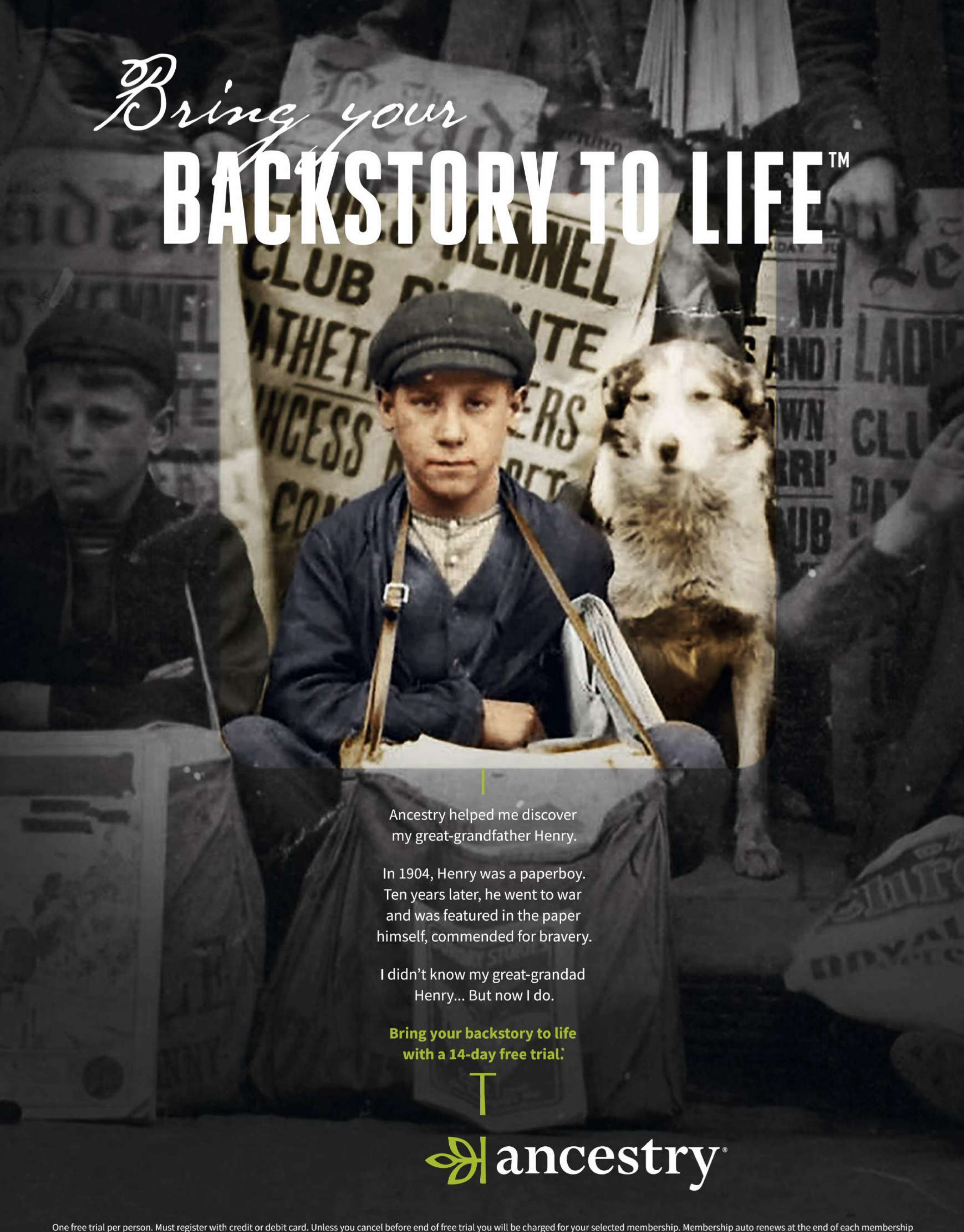
Was Jesus really resurrected?
Did the Romans get to China?
Why was Anne Boleyn executed?
Where is Abu Bakr's fleet?
What doomed the Franklin expedition?
Why did Agatha Christie disappear?
What caused the dancing plague?
Where is Cleopatra's tomb?
Was there really a Trojan War?
Why did the Roanoke colony vanish?
Where is the Roman Ninth Legion?
Who built Stonehenge?
What happened to Amelia Earhart?
Were the princes in the Tower murdered?

Surviving the Great Plague

The crusaders' Muslim allies

At home with the Victorians

The Nazis' last battle



Ancestry helped me discover my great-grandfather Henry.

In 1904, Henry was a paperboy. Ten years later, he went to war and was featured in the paper himself, commended for bravery.

I didn't know my great-grandad Henry... But now I do.

Bring your backstory to life with a 14-day free trial.*

ancestry®

One free trial per person. Must register with credit or debit card. Unless you cancel before end of free trial you will be charged for your selected membership. Membership auto renews at the end of each membership period, unless notified otherwise. If you do not wish to renew cancel at least 2 days before renewal by visiting My Account or calling 0800 404 9723.

WELCOME

BBC
HiSTORY
MAGAZINE

JUNE 2020

“It was 20 years ago this month that the first edition of *BBC History Magazine* hit the shelves. “In a complex world, **people are interested more than ever in their history** – the forces that have shaped us, the stories that bring people to life,” wrote Greg Neale in his first editor’s letter. And while much has changed since then, this sentiment surely remains true today. If anything, we are now living through one of the most complex times of all, with the continued fallout from the coronavirus pandemic.

We’re now producing the magazine entirely from our homes, and I know many of you will be making similar, or indeed more drastic, adjustments. I hope that you are all faring well and that history is shedding some light on, or providing relief from, the news agenda.

In this month’s issue, we’ve sought to cover both of those angles. On page 46 you’ll find a feature chronicling how Londoners sought to survive the **Great Plague of the 1660s**. And then, for a little escapism, look out for our extended feature on **20 of history’s greatest mysteries** (page 26). You’ll find details of how to vote for your favourite at the end.

One final note. A magazine without readers would be a pretty sorry affair and so I’d like to thank you all for your support over the past two decades. Whether this is your first edition, or you’ve been with us since the start, we’re enormously grateful that you’ve decided to share your historical journey with us. Here’s to the next 20 years!

Rob Attar
Editor

THIS ISSUE’S CONTRIBUTORS

Hilary Mantel

I seem to have spent years at my desk combing through both national and local records, not in pursuit of a particular fact or theme but just trying to absorb the era through my pores, make myself fluent and enlarge my range of references.

Hilary talks about the writing of her *Wolf Hall* novels on page 53

Suleiman A Mourad

The more I studied the crusades, the more I came upon stories of Muslim and crusader alliances and exchanges, leading me to question our modern fixation on the period as a clash of civilisations.

Suleiman argues that Muslim-crusader relations were defined by collaboration as well as violence on page 62

Emma Griffin

Victorian autobiographies offer a new perspective on the statistics and numbers that make up big economic trends. They shed light on how individual families felt about their own position – how wealthy or poor people felt that they were.

Emma discusses her new book about working-class Victorian families on page 70

MORE FROM US

historyextra.com

HiSTORY
History's Greatest
MYSTERIES

The website of *BBC History Magazine* is filled with exciting content on British and world history.

For more information on the **content in this issue**, go to **historyextra.com/june-2020**

The History Extra podcast

Download episodes for free from iTunes and other providers, or via **historyextra.com/podcast**

Our digital editions

BBC History Magazine is available for the Kindle, Kindle Fire, iPad/iPhone, Google Play and Zinio. Find us in your app store or visit **historyextra.com/subscribe**

Facebook and Twitter

twitter.com/historyextra
facebook.com/historyextra

Our special editions

Discover our range of collector’s editions at **historyextra.com/special-editions**

The Story of the Napoleonic Wars
THE CRUSADES
GREAT BATTLES OF WORLD WAR TWO
Volume One: Land Battles

Contact us

PHONE **Subscriptions & back issues** 03330 162115 **Editorial** 0117 300 8699

EMAIL **Subscriptions & back issues** bbchistory@buysubscriptions.com
Editorial historymagazine@historyextra.com

POST **Subscriptions & back issues** *BBC History Magazine*, PO Box 3320, 3 Queensbridge, Northampton, NN4 7BF. Basic annual subscription rates: UK: £48, Eire/Europe: £67, ROW: £69

In the **US/Canada** you can contact us at:
PO Box 37495, Boone, IA 50037
BHIcustserv@cdsfulfillment.com,
britsubs.com/history, Toll-free 800-342-3592

COVER IMAGES: STONEHENGE, AMELIA EARHART IN 1931, 16TH CENTURY PORTRAIT OF ANNE BOLEYN, EDWARD V AND HIS BROTHER RICHARD THE DUKE OF YORK, BY PAUL DELAROCHE 1910: GETTY IMAGES.
THIS PAGE: STEVE SAYERS/FRAN MONKS/GERORGE MILES

CONTENTS

JUNE 2020

FEATURES

20 The Nazis' last battle
Eric Lee tells the story of a Second World War clash in the Netherlands that continued beyond VE Day

26 Greatest mysteries
Twenty historians describe the historical conundrums that they would most like to find the answers to

46 "Lord have mercy upon us"
Vanessa Harding on how Londoners tried to survive the Great Plague that stalked the city in the reign of Charles II

53 Mantel on Cromwell
The Booker-prize winning novelist explores how she navigated Thomas Cromwell's final years

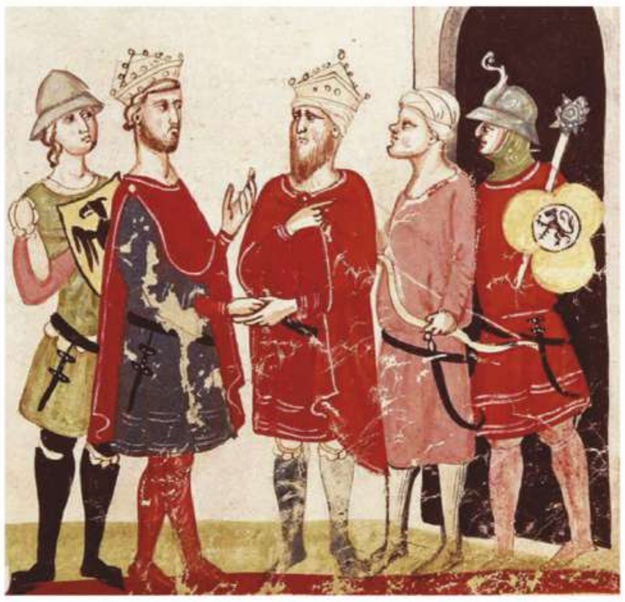
58 From riches to rags
David Olusoga reveals how Britain's grand houses descended into slums during the Victorian era

62 Crusaders' Muslim allies
Suleiman A Mourad argues that the story of the crusades is more complex than a simple clash of civilisations

Discover the story of an unusual coda to the Second World War in Europe, on page 20

58 The social changes that created **Victorian slums**

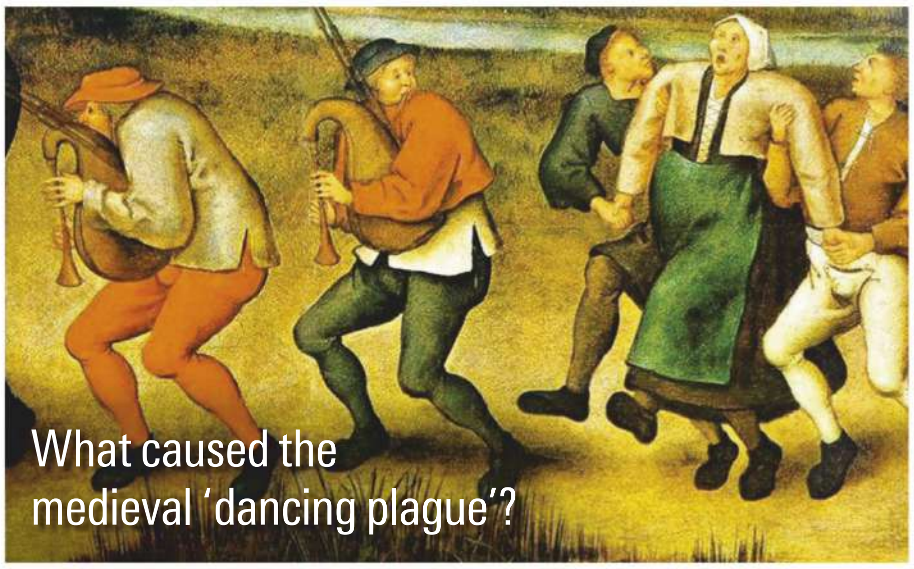
62 Why **crusaders and Muslims** were both friends and enemies



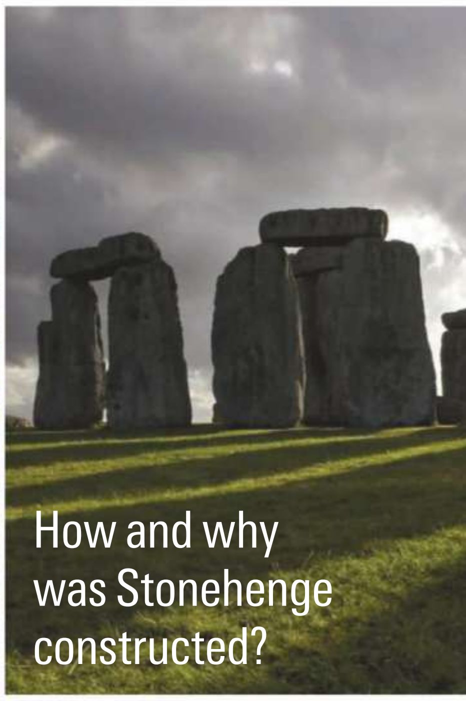
ALAMY

26 History's greatest mysteries...

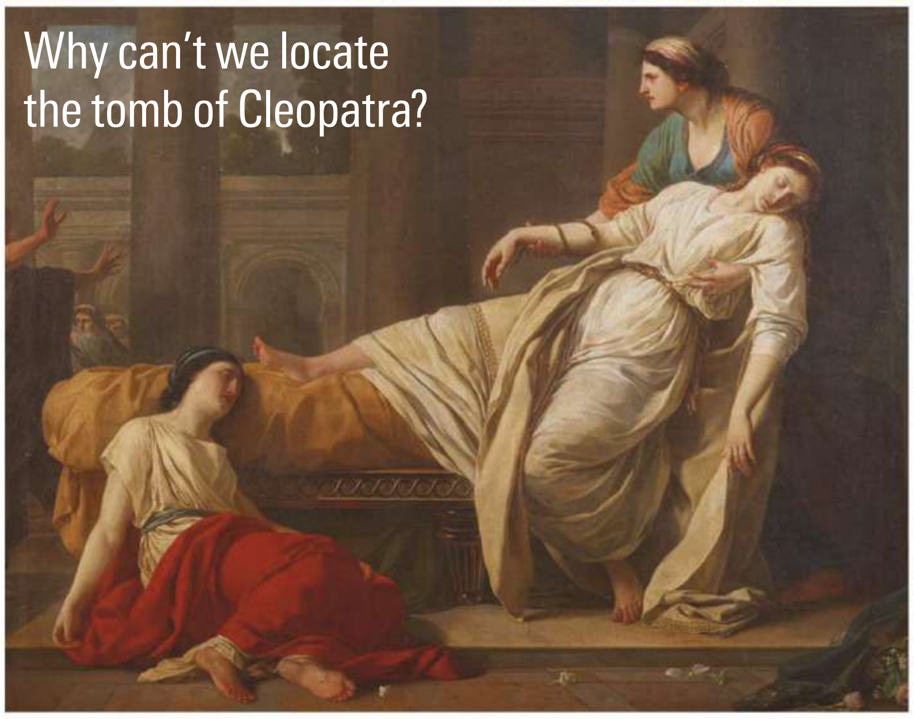
Experts tackle 20 of the most perplexing riddles of the past



What caused the medieval 'dancing plague'?

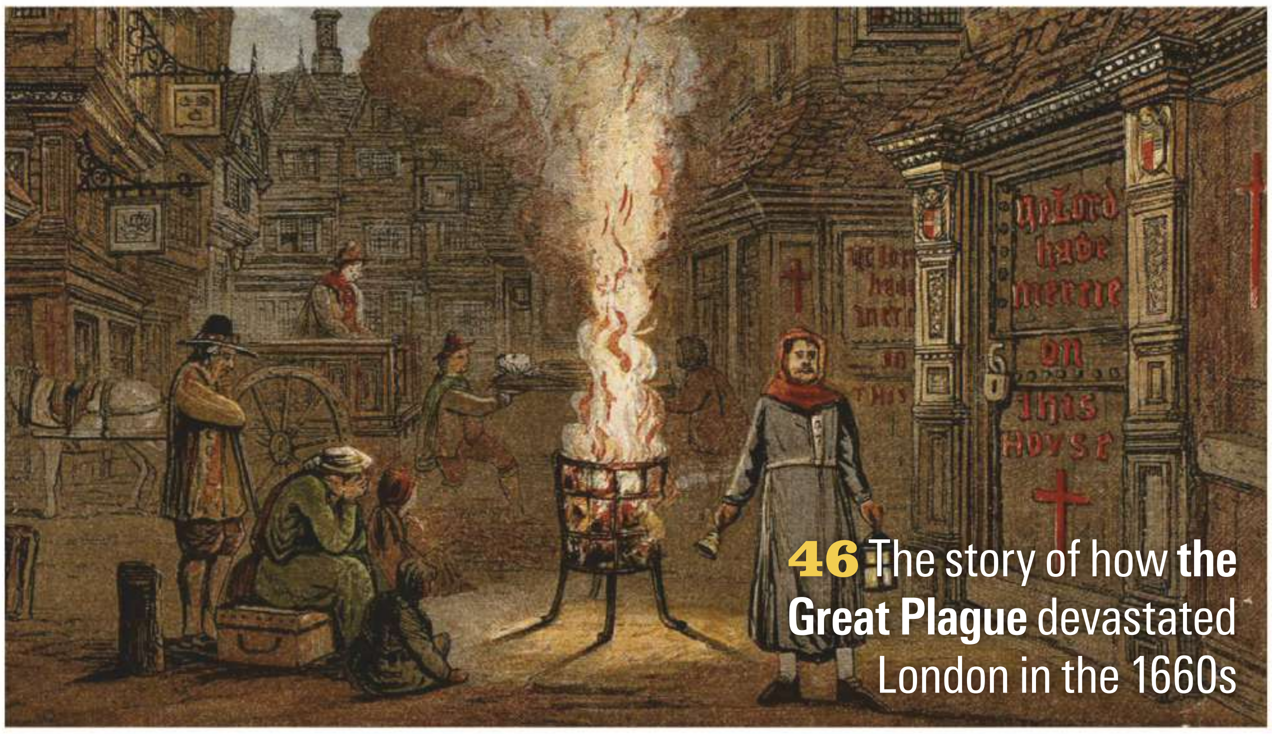


How and why was Stonehenge constructed?



Why can't we locate the tomb of Cleopatra?

53 Hilary Mantel discusses how she **recreated the Tudor era** in her novels



ALAMY/WELLCOME IMAGES/GEORGE MILES

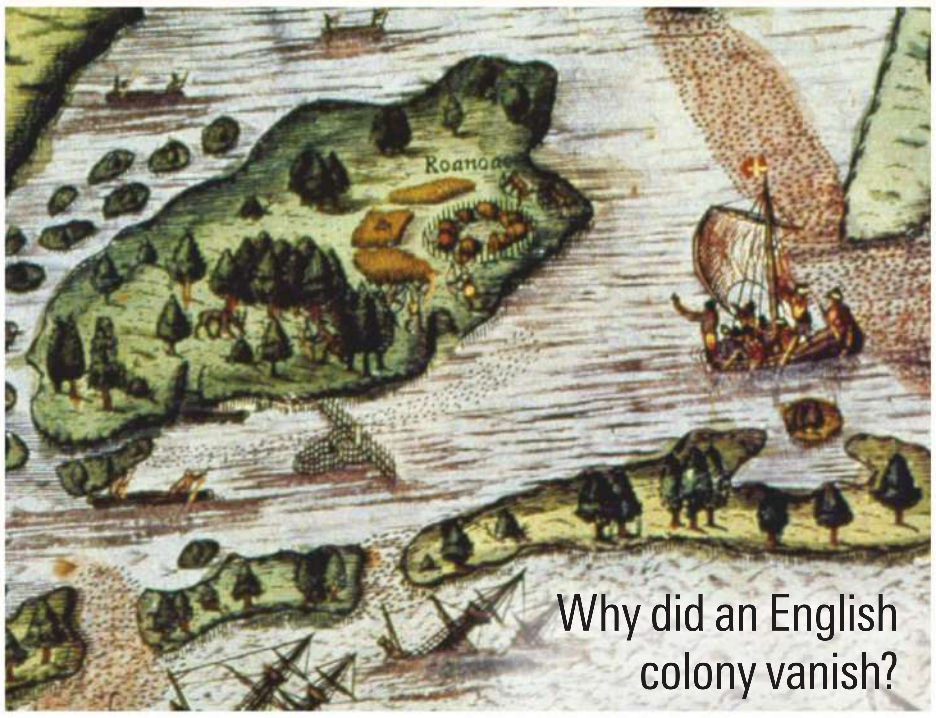
46 The story of how **the Great Plague** devastated London in the 1660s

» **Cast your vote in our poll at historyextra.com/greatest-mystery**

HISTORY'S
20
GREATEST MYSTERIES

Could Roman legions have made it all the way to China?

What made Mao's heir apparent flee?



Why did an English colony vanish?

EVERY MONTH

This month in history

7 **History news**
11 **Michael Wood** on the magazine's 20th birthday
12 **Anniversaries**
16 **David Olusoga's Hidden Histories**

18 Letters

Books

70 **Interview:** Emma Griffin discusses her new book on 19th-century family life
74 New history **books reviewed**

Encounters

80 **Diary:** What to watch and listen to this month
85 Our selection of **history podcasts** to enjoy right now

87 **Prize crossword**

90 **My history hero** Chris Mason chooses Frank Gillard

57 History Events
Save the date for our weekends in Chester and Winchester

44 Subscribe
Save when you subscribe today

20
HISTORY
History's Greatest MYSTERIES

USPS Identification Statement BBC HISTORY (ISSN 1469-8552) (USPS 024-177) June 2020 is published 13 times a year under licence from BBC Studios by Immediate Media Co Bristol Ltd, Eagle House, Colston Avenue, Bristol BS1 4ST, UK. Distributed in the US by Circulation Specialists, Inc., 2 Corporate Drive, Suite 945, Shelton CT 06484-6238. Periodicals postage paid at Shelton, CT and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE, PO Box 37495, Boone, IA 50037-0495.

NEW to The Folio Society's spectacular A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE series

GEORGE R. R. MARTIN

A CLASH OF KINGS

Illustrated by JONATHAN BURTON

'masterpieces of the bookmaker's art'

GEORGE R. R. MARTIN

GEORGE
R. R. MARTIN
A CLASH OF KINGS
FS
GEORGE
R. R. MARTIN
A CLASH OF KINGS
FS

ORDER NOW

The Folio Society

Available exclusively from
foliosociety.com/CLASH

ALSO AVAILABLE

A GAME OF THRONES

INCLUDING FOLD-OUT MAP

GEORGE
R. R. MARTIN
A GAME OF THRONES
GEORGE
R. R. MARTIN
A GAME OF THRONES

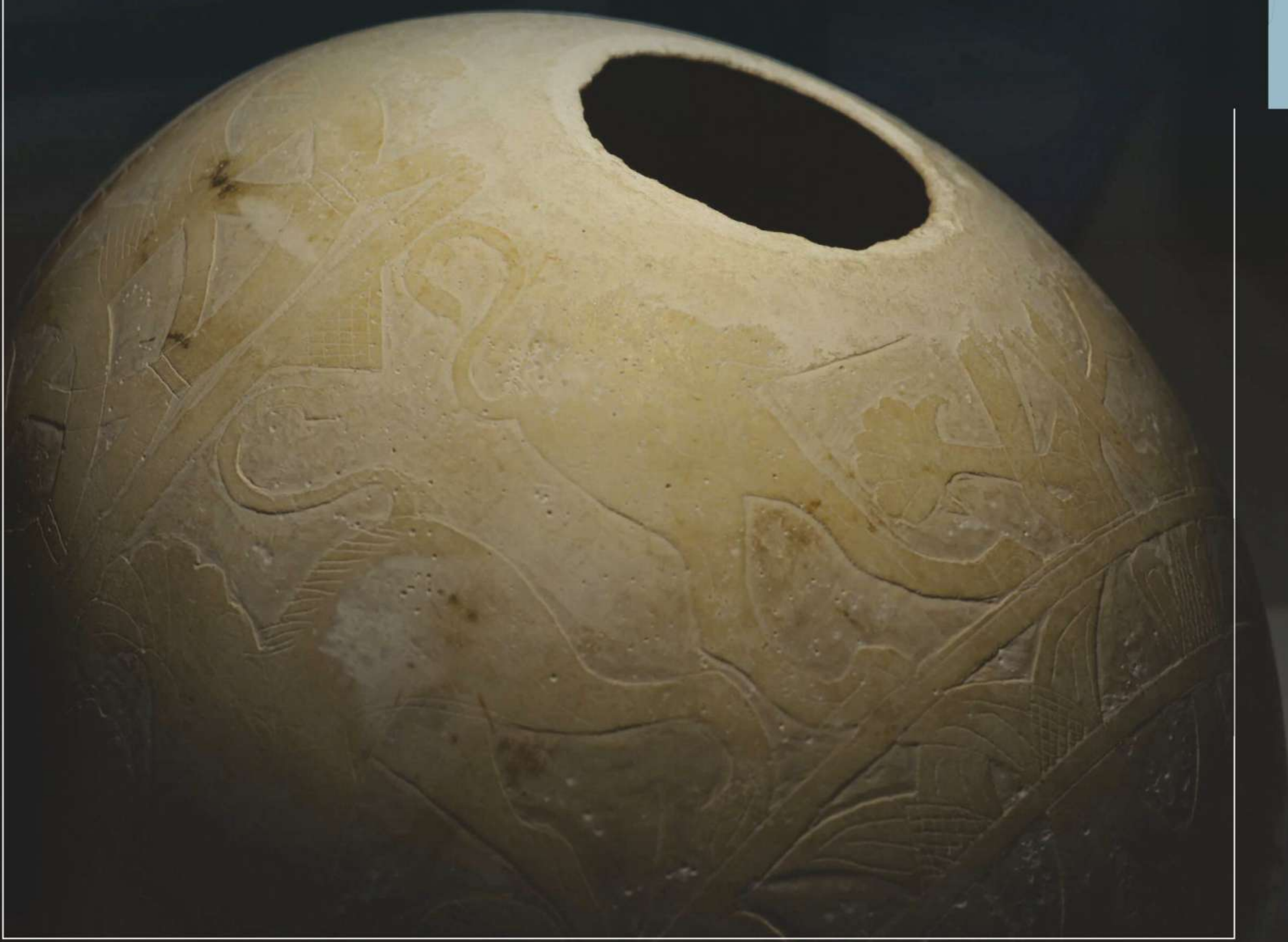
NEWS
COMMENT
ANNIVERSARIES
HIDDEN HISTORIES

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

EYE-OPENER

Trading patterns

A new study of intricately decorated ostrich eggs found in Italy suggests that the ancient world was more interconnected than previously thought. By comparing chemical analysis of the shells with 21st-century examples, researchers were able to trace their origins – revealing that the artefacts could have been traded across the Mediterranean, north Africa and the Middle East during the Bronze and Iron Ages. Archaeologists from the universities of Durham and Bristol also attempted to replicate the methods used to produce decorative patterns (such as those seen below), but were unable to do so.



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL-THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Have a story? Please email Matt Elton at matt.elton@immediate.co.uk

TALKING POINTS

Quarantine quarrels

With much of the world still in lockdown, Twitter set out to identify the historical figure with whom it would be worst to be quarantined. **ANNA WHITELOCK** reveals the candidates

Along with much of the rest of the world, historians have been in lockdown – but, unlike most other people, their parlour games have tended to revolve around the past. **Ray Ball** (@ProfessorBall)'s starter for 10, "which historical figure from your research would be absolutely insufferable to be quarantined with?", generated a huge range of replies and all kinds of characters – some well known, others less so.

For **Dr Andrew Robinson** (@Andrew R_Physics), it was an easy pick: "Sir Isaac Newton. Anyway, he would be much too busy being super-productive and devising his Theory of Gravity." **Peter Furtado** (@peterhistoryfm) thought that American poet, philosopher and abolitionist Henry David Thoreau would be insufferable: "He'd be desperate to be socially distanced, and would go on and on about how society (comprising a load of irritating families, sick people and old people) had stupidly imprisoned him, a healthy single young man."

For **Ruth Selman** (@Historyscape), it would be Samuel Pepys. "He'd be trying it on, moaning about his Parmesan and then writing about me in code," she said. **Dr J Davis** (@JenniferJ_Davis) thought that 18th-century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau "would secretly revel in it, penning endless op-eds about how he needs nothing from no one – meanwhile Therese does all the cooking, cleaning, nursing, etc."

Laura R Prieto (@Laura_R_Prieto) suggested US statesman Theodore Roosevelt. "Others might enjoy his blustery personality & strenuous life sermons, but I would NOT find it bully [sic] being quarantined with him. I would need a really big stick."

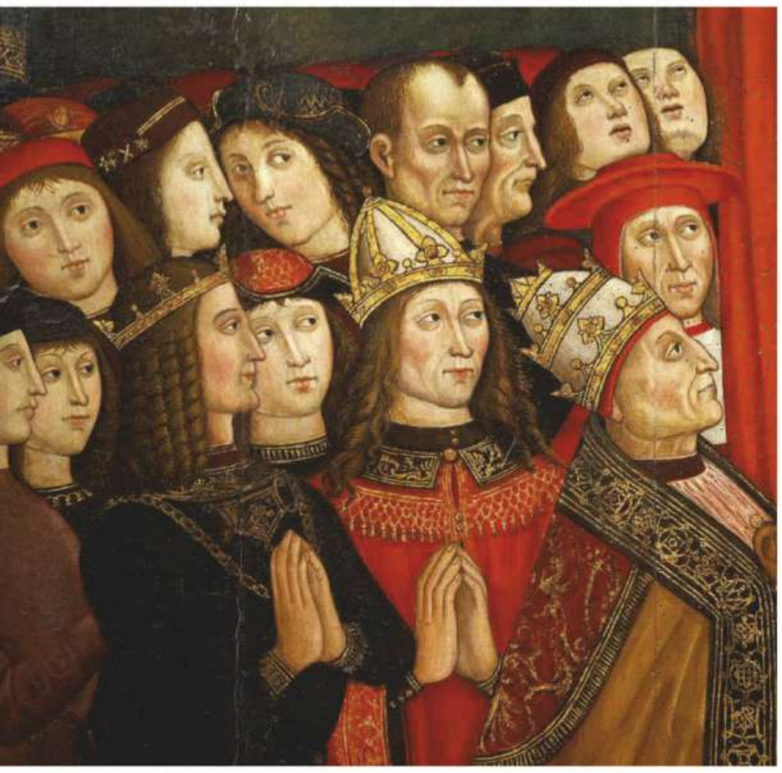
James Wilson (@alawyerwrites) had no doubt that 20th-century military officer Lord Mountbatten would be an insufferable housemate, "reckless with other people's lives and absolutely shameless about taking credit for other people's success and blaming everyone else when things go wrong and claiming success in the face of disaster."

The Non-Evil Scott McMillan (@guy_lusignan) feared lockdown with "Barnabe Barnes, late 16th-century English poet and playwright. Dude tried to murder a guy with a poisoned lemon in a dispute over verse structure." **Cheryl Morgan** (@Cheryl Morgan) nominated Nero, because "he'd be putting on concerts all day and expecting me to listen and applaud." **Claire McLeod** (@ClaireMacLeod42) had no doubt: "I just know in my gut that Pope Alexander VI would constantly be leaving the toilet seat up." Finally, **Serena Jones** (@Serena1642) thought "pretty much the entire English parliament in 1644". I wouldn't disagree, but do we need to go that far back? H

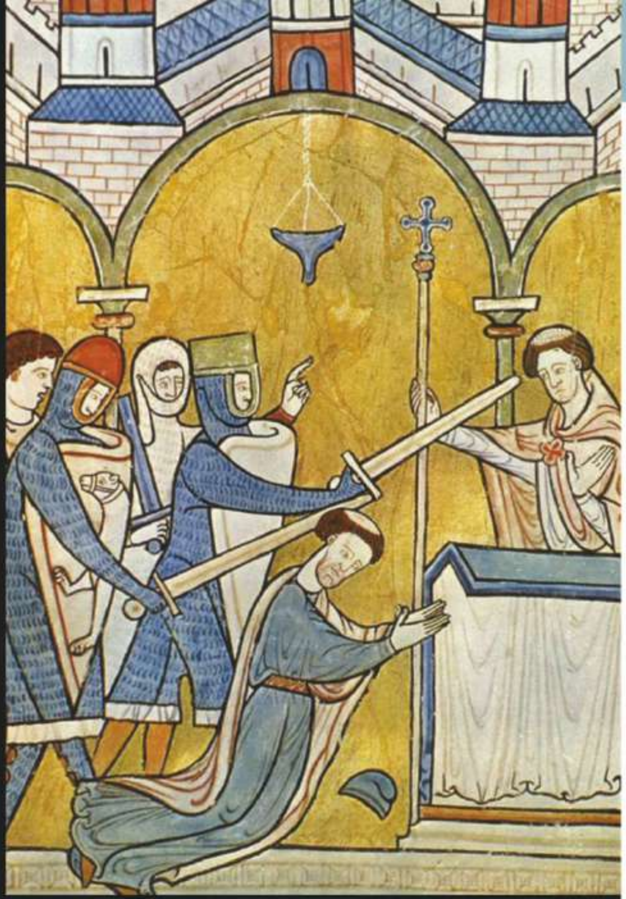
Join the debate at **twitter.com/historyextra**

Anna Whitelock is head of history at Royal Holloway, University of London

> " I just know in my gut that he would constantly be leaving the toilet seat up "



A 16th-century portrait of Pope Alexander VI. A Twitter user worried that the pontiff would prove to be a lockdown nightmare



A depiction of the murder of Becket – apparently dubbed "this turbulent priest" by Henry II

MIDDLE AGES

Ice captures effects of medieval murder

The 1170 murder of Thomas Becket and samples of lead pollution found in ice in the Swiss-Italian Alps may seem, at first glance, unconnected. Yet a study of a 72-metre core taken from an alpine glacier suggests that the consequences of the archbishop's death did indeed ripple throughout Europe's climate.

The research, by experts at Harvard, Nottingham and Maine universities, used lasers to analyse 800-year-old ice samples for traces of pollutants. Bubbles, trapped as the ice grew each year, revealed that a huge spike in the amount of lead in the air was captured in the 12th century – which atmospheric modelling showed was carried from mines in the north-west of England.

The link to Becket comes because Henry feared excommunication by the pope following the archbishop's death. The king attempted to get back into the church's good books by promising to build new monastic institutions – all of which featured a huge amount of lead in their roofing. Its production caused the surge in pollution apparent in the ice.

Intriguingly, though, that's not the only medieval event whose impact can be traced in this way. "The ice core shows precisely when one king died and lead production fell and then rose again with the next monarch," said Christopher Loveluck from the University of Nottingham. "We can see the deaths of King Henry II, Richard the Lionheart and King John there in the ancient ice." H

GETTY IMAGES

HISTORY IN THE NEWS

A selection of the stories hitting the **history headlines**

Lockdown aids rain research

A project to fill in gaps in Britain's historical weather data has been completed thanks to thousands of volunteers stuck at home as a result of the coronavirus lockdown. The Rainfall Rescue campaign called on the volunteers – many of whom suddenly had a lot more time on their hands – to digitise data previously only available as scans of original paper records. As a result, 5.25 million measurements of precipitation recorded in rainfall gauges around the UK between 1677 and 1960 have now been collated digitally.

Flooding in Beverley, East Yorkshire in 1912. A project to collate UK rainfall data attracted 16,000 volunteers

Brutal conditions at Nazis' Alderney camp revealed

An archaeological survey of the former site of a Nazi camp on Alderney, in the Channel Islands, has confirmed eyewitness testimony of its harsh environment.

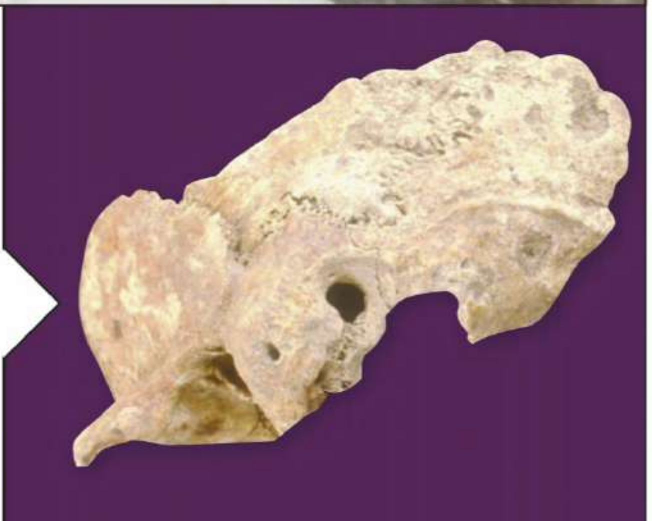
Lager Sylt was built as a forced labour camp in 1942, and adapted for use as a concentration camp the following year. So little is known about what happened at the site that Alderney has since become known as 'the island of silence'.

The decade-long project used non-invasive surveying techniques and historical aerial photographs to create maps and a 3D model of the camp. They reveal that each prisoner had less than one and a half square metres of space in the barracks, as well as the presence of imposing guard towers and fences – despite the fact that the camp's location meant that such features weren't necessary for security reasons. A survey of Lager Sylt's archaeological evolution, meanwhile, charts the way in which its size and security measures grew as it transformed into a concentration camp holding a thousand political prisoners.

The entrance to Lager Sylt camp in Alderney features a memorial erected by survivors in 2008

Bones hint at ancient surgery

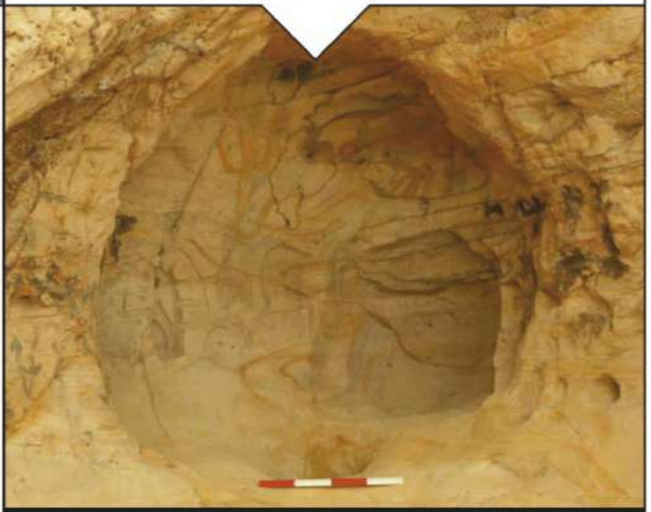
Skeletons discovered on the Greek island of Thassos bear what archaeologists believe to be evidence of complex surgical procedures. The remains, buried between the fourth and seventh century AD, feature the marks of both trauma and subsequent repair, likely by an expert. Research by a team from Adelphi University in New York state suggests that one of the 10 individuals – an archer – underwent operations on his neck, head and brain, although it's thought that he died shortly afterwards.



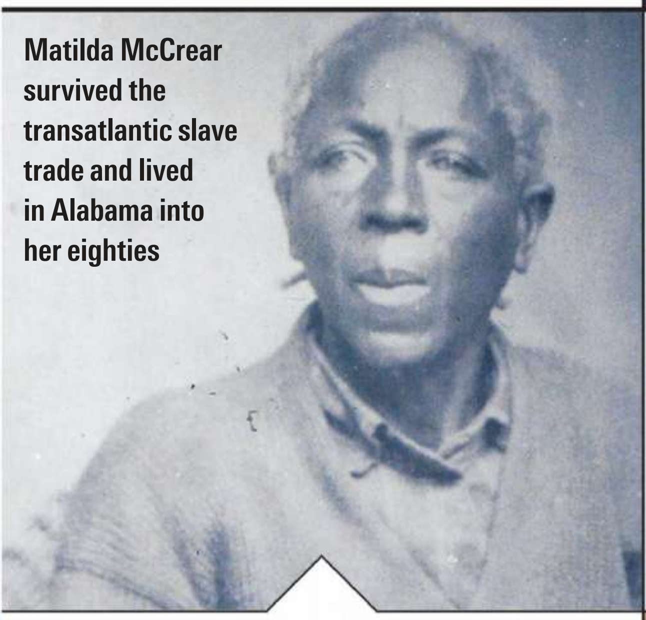
The bones reveal evidence of complex operations, including boring holes into the skull

Medieval cave found by chance

Engineers repairing a landslide next to a railway line near Guildford in Surrey have uncovered a cavern believed to date from the 14th century. The walls of the subterranean complex feature evidence of writing and drawing, as well as decorative niches. Archaeologists believe it may have been used as a shrine or hermitage connected to the nearby St Catherine's Chapel. It's hoped that further analysis, including radiocarbon dating of soot and charcoal, will help to more precisely date the discoveries.



Markings on the walls of the cave include a Christian cross and what is thought to be carved initials



Matilda McCrear survived the transatlantic slave trade and lived in Alabama into her eighties

Last slave-ship survivor traced

A west African woman has been identified as the last known survivor of the transatlantic slave trade. Matilda McCrear was abducted in July 1860 at the age of two, and taken to Alabama on board the *Clotida*, the final slave ship to bring captives from Africa to the US. Research by Hannah Durkin at Newcastle University reveals that McCrear died in her early eighties in 1940, three years after the person previously thought to have survived the longest – a woman named Redoshi, who was imprisoned aboard the same ship.

ALAMY/BRIDGEMAN/JOHNY MCCLEAR/PA/ALAMY

BBC FROM THE MAKERS OF **BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE**

GREAT BATTLES OF WORLD WAR TWO

Volume One: **Land Battles**

From north Africa to the Pacific, this first volume of a new three-part series explores the decisive ground campaigns that shaped WWII. Discover:

- Why Hitler's invasion of France was his biggest gamble
- How Montgomery masterminded victory at El Alamein
- The inside story behind the brutal battle of Okinawa
- Why the Germans were crushed at Stalingrad
- How the Allies liberated Normandy after D-Day
- The psychological effects of battlefield trauma on Allied and Axis soldiers

PLUS – subscribers to *BBC History Magazine* receive FREE UK postage on this special edition

BBC FROM THE MAKERS OF BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE
GREAT BATTLES OF WORLD WAR TWO
Volume One: Land Battles
• Fall of France • Siege of Tobruk • Moscow • Singapore • El Alamein • Stalingrad • Kursk • Monte Cassino • Imphal and Kohima • Normandy • Okinawa AND MORE...
BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE
£9.99

ONLY £9.99 INCLUDING FREE P&P*

TOBRUK SURVIVING THE SIEGE

Find out how the Allies survived desert life during the **siege of Tobruk**

HELL IN THE HILLS

Discover the stories of troops who served at the **battle of Monte Cassino**

TAKING BACK THE PHILIPPINES

Learn about the struggle to **free the Philippines** from Japanese control

Pre-order online **www.buysubscriptions.com/LandBattles**
or call us on **03330 162 138**+ and quote LAND BATTLES PRINT 1

+ UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). Outside of free call packages call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open Monday to Friday 9am–5pm.
* Subscribers to *BBC History Magazine* receive FREE UK POSTAGE on this special edition. Prices including postage are: £11.49 for all non-subscribers, £12.99 for Europe and £13.49 for the Rest of World. All orders subject to availability. Please allow up to 21 days for delivery.

MICHAEL WOOD ON...

BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE'S 20TH BIRTHDAY

“It's been a remarkable 20 years – the world has changed dramatically”

Strange days. I'm writing this still under lockdown, looking out over eerily empty London streets, as I was for my last column. A suspended state, which I am sure has prompted for all of us many thoughts about life, time and history. It is an unprecedented moment for almost everyone on the planet; through phones, emails, TV, radio and internet, we are all participating in the same story in real time. When has that happened before in human history? Quite a moment, then, to celebrate the 20th anniversary of *BBC History Magazine*.

It has been an extraordinary 20 years, in which the world has changed dramatically. I daresay future historians will look back on it as a key period as we enter the make-or-break decade for the planet. Of course, we often look to history for explanations in times of crisis. Sometimes this makes us realise that we should not try to 'get back to normal', because 'normal' was part of the problem – and that's when we realise that we need new histories!

Now we have a global virus, which the historian can already see as part of a longer pattern of transmission of such infections (Sars, Ebola, Marburg, Mers) from animals to humans as human pressure on natural habitats grows more intense. Just as historians peer back into the 14th century to see where the Black Death originated, and how it spread, we can see this as the key link. With too many people, and the gap growing between rich and poor, the desperate poor are pushed to despoil nature.

History, then, is still the great explainer. This magazine has always tried to not only look at what happened in the past, but also for clues in the past that help us understand the present. The key is to see history not as something fixed but, instead, as changing over time as our knowledge expands and our understanding of ourselves evolves.

After all, history is always the product of the here and now, and looking back at early issues of the magazine offers a sense of how far we have come. The intervening 20 years have seen a broadening and enriching of our ways of understanding and telling history in public culture. Twenty years ago, despite the great gains of the feminist movement since the 1970s, history was still largely male, white and middle class. Nowadays the magazine – and indeed my own columns – feature a real diversity of narratives: women's history, black history, and others. And a diverse range of voices have been writing in these pages: Nathen Amin, Olivette Otele, Yasmin Khan, Janina Ramirez, Rana Mitter and David Olusoga, to name but a few. We should soon achieve the goal of gender equality of contributors; alternative histories are now foregrounded. Without that, history today is meaningless.

All this is reshaping in fascinating ways the new narratives that we create. It's been a boomtime for social history: tales of communities, streets, and even houses. Whether Africans in Roman Britain, black Tudors, or Kibworth framework knitters, history is no longer told only from the top down, but from the bottom up; from the provinces not the centre; from the people not the rulers. And with so much young, diverse talent working in the field, we are getting new takes on old stories.

Take, for example, that massive and continuing fact in all of our lives: imperial history. Whether our roots are in Africa, the Indian subcontinent or the Caribbean; whether our ancestors were Irish soldiers, Welsh steelmen, Scottish engineers or English sailors, the empire shaped us all. As the common experience of the British people over the past two centuries, it should be at centre of the school curriculum, encompassing narratives of colonialism, race and slavery too. It should also incorporate the view of the colonised – as, for example, in Priyamvada Gopal's recent book, *Insurgent Empire*, which shows how British attitudes to empire were changed by resistance movements abroad.

Of course, the wartime narratives of Dunkirk and D-Day still hold powerful sway in the popular imagination, but let's see them in the bigger perspective that history offers. And aren't narratives richer and more fascinating the more they embrace complex human reality – which always has more than one explanation? So here's to the next 20 years of stories and expert analysis. As the saying goes, may you live in interesting times! H

Michael Wood is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He has presented numerous BBC series, and his books include *The Story of England* (Viking, 2010)

ILLUSTRATION BY **FEMKE DE JONG**

ANNIVERSARIES

DOMINIC SANDBROOK highlights events that took place in June in history

17 JUNE 1497

Henry VII crushes Cornish rebels

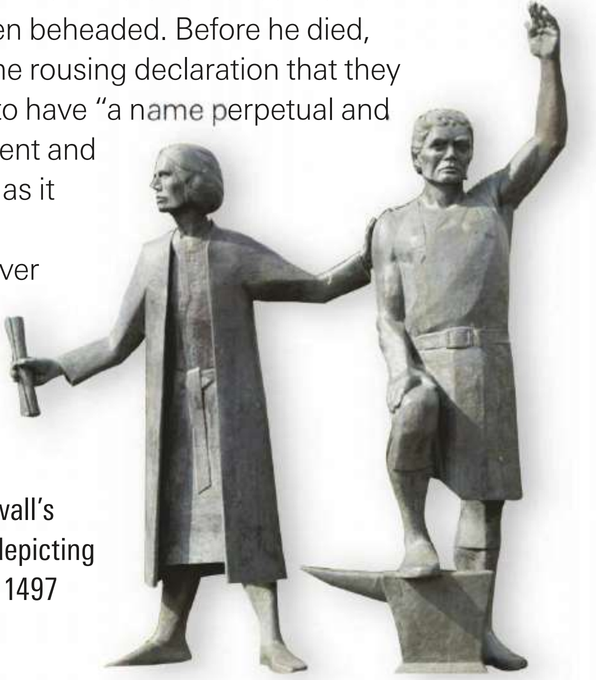
A protest that began in Cornwall comes to a bloody conclusion in the capital

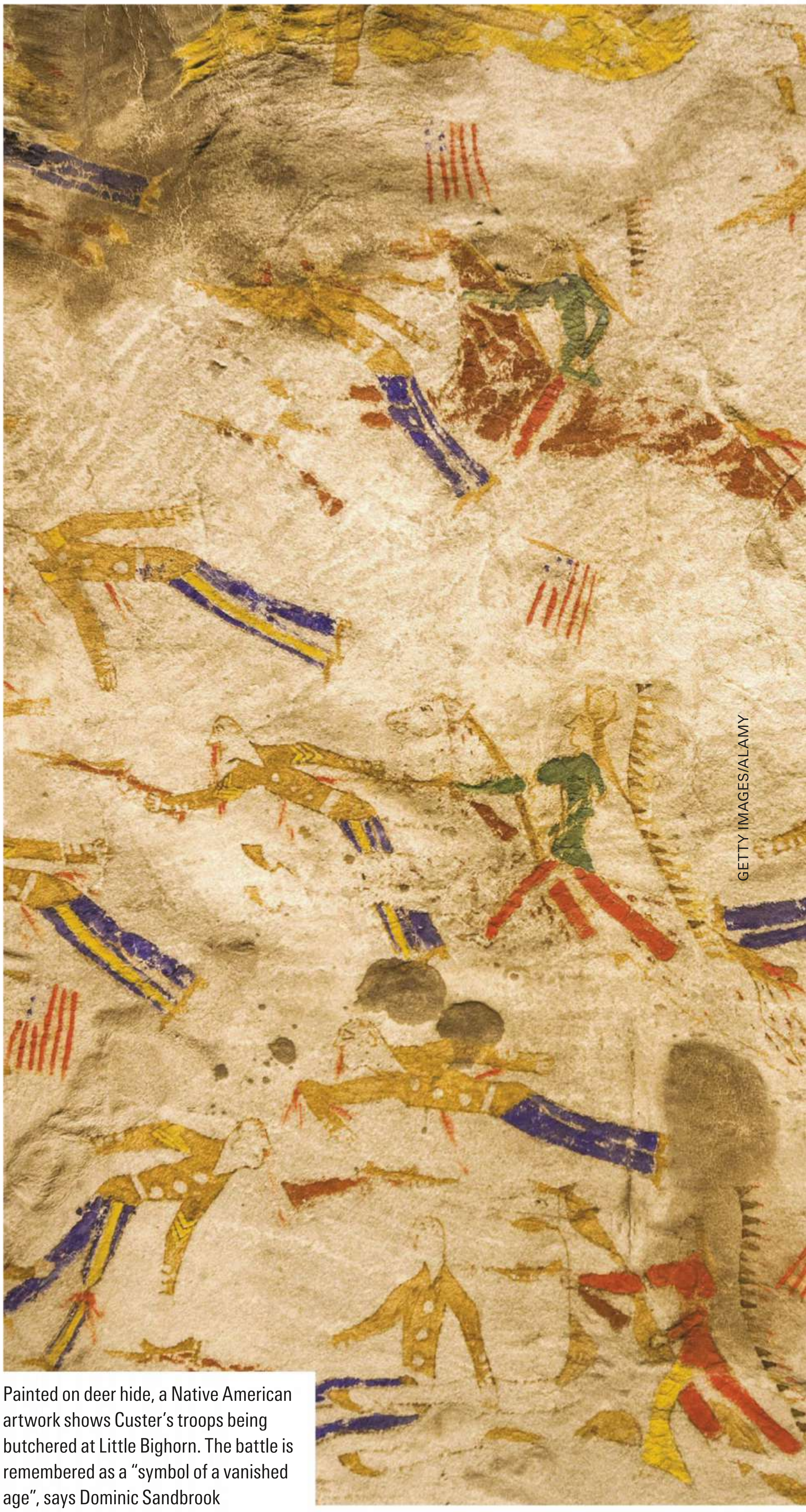
It might seem odd that the great Cornish Rebellion of 1497, one of the landmarks in the county's history, came to an end with a battle in Deptford, now in south London. But in a way, that captures the strange flavour of this half-forgotten episode.

The rebellion had been triggered at the end of the previous year, when the Tudor king Henry VII, well known for his ability to squeeze money out of his subjects, suspended Cornwall's long-standing tax exemptions. Under Michael An Gof, a blacksmith, and Thomas Flamank, a lawyer and former MP, several thousand Cornishmen rose up and marched into Devon.

Unfortunately, their strategy was not entirely clear. The king did nothing, so the Cornishmen had no choice but to keep going. They moved on to Bristol, Salisbury and Winchester, but still Henry did nothing. Some of them went home; others moved on to Kent, and then into Surrey. Eventually, on 17 June, they arrived in Deptford – and this time Henry's army was waiting.

The battle itself was something of a shambles. At one point Henry's commander got so carried away that he ended up being captured by the Cornish. Bizarrely, though, they immediately let him go. The upshot, anyway, was that the Cornishmen were defeated and their leaders arrested. Both were sentenced to be hanged and then beheaded. Before he died, An Gof made the rousing declaration that they were destined to have "a name perpetual and a fame permanent and immortal". Yet, as it turns out, most people have never heard of him.

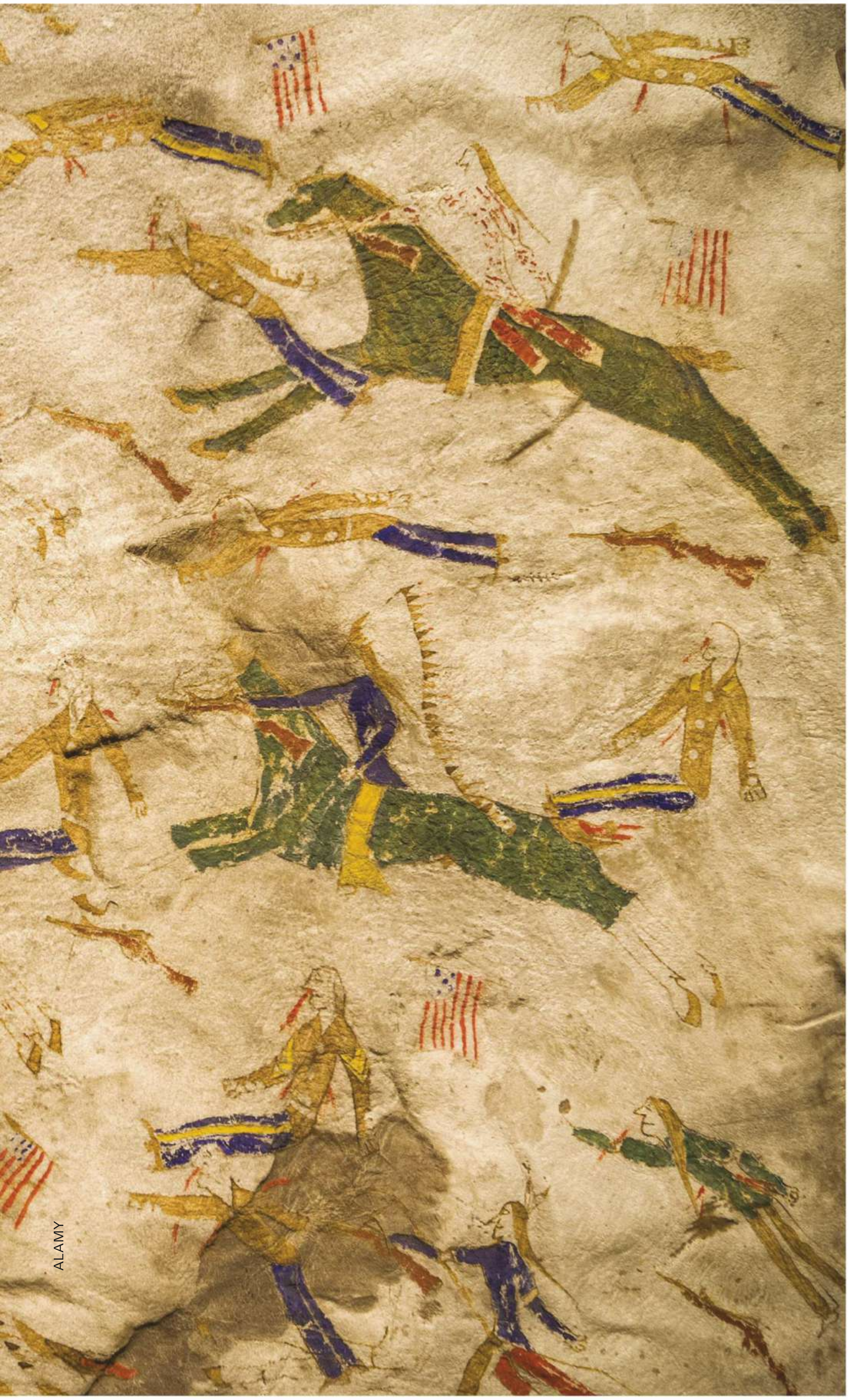

A statue on Cornwall's Lizard peninsula depicting the leaders of the 1497 Cornish Rebellion


GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

Painted on deer hide, a Native American artwork shows Custer's troops being butchered at Little Bighorn. The battle is remembered as a "symbol of a vanished age", says Dominic Sandbrook

30 JUNE 1971

Shortly after its crew (right) become the first humans to spend time on an orbiting space station, a ventilation valve malfunctions on the **Soyuz 11 Soviet spacecraft**. On its return to Earth, a recovery team opens the capsule and discovers the crew inside are dead.



ALAMY

25 JUNE 1876

General Custer meets his match at Little Bighorn

US federal troops are cut down by Sioux warriors

As the clock struck midnight on 3 July 1876, the United States celebrated its centenary. In Philadelphia, almost 500,000 people crowded the streets around Independence Hall, where the newly cast Centennial Bell rang out 13 times, once for each of the original colonies.

And yet, although none of the revellers knew it, a shadow was falling over the birthday celebrations. Hundreds of miles to the west, a steamer was chugging down the Yellowstone river with the survivors of the most famous military disaster in American history.

A week earlier, on 25 June, Lieutenant General George Custer's Seventh Cavalry had charged into battle against Sitting Bull's Sioux near the Little Bighorn river, in what is now the state of Montana. Contrary to the swashbuckling legend, Custer was a man on the slide, a promising officer who had turned into a jaded failure. He needed a victory. And if he had not divided his forces, he might have got one.

What exactly happened at Little Bighorn will never be known. Confident that he had found Sitting Bull's camp, Custer divided his troops into three, hoping to cut his opponents off. But the initial assault went wrong and after less than an hour, Custer found himself trapped on the hill above the river, at the mercy of a vast force of war-whooping Sioux fighters. Because there were few survivors, we do not even know exactly how he died. Some say he was cut down by an enemy bullet; others that he was wounded and then shot by his brother to spare him from agonising torture. Either way, the battle brought the end of Custer's life – and the beginning of his legend.

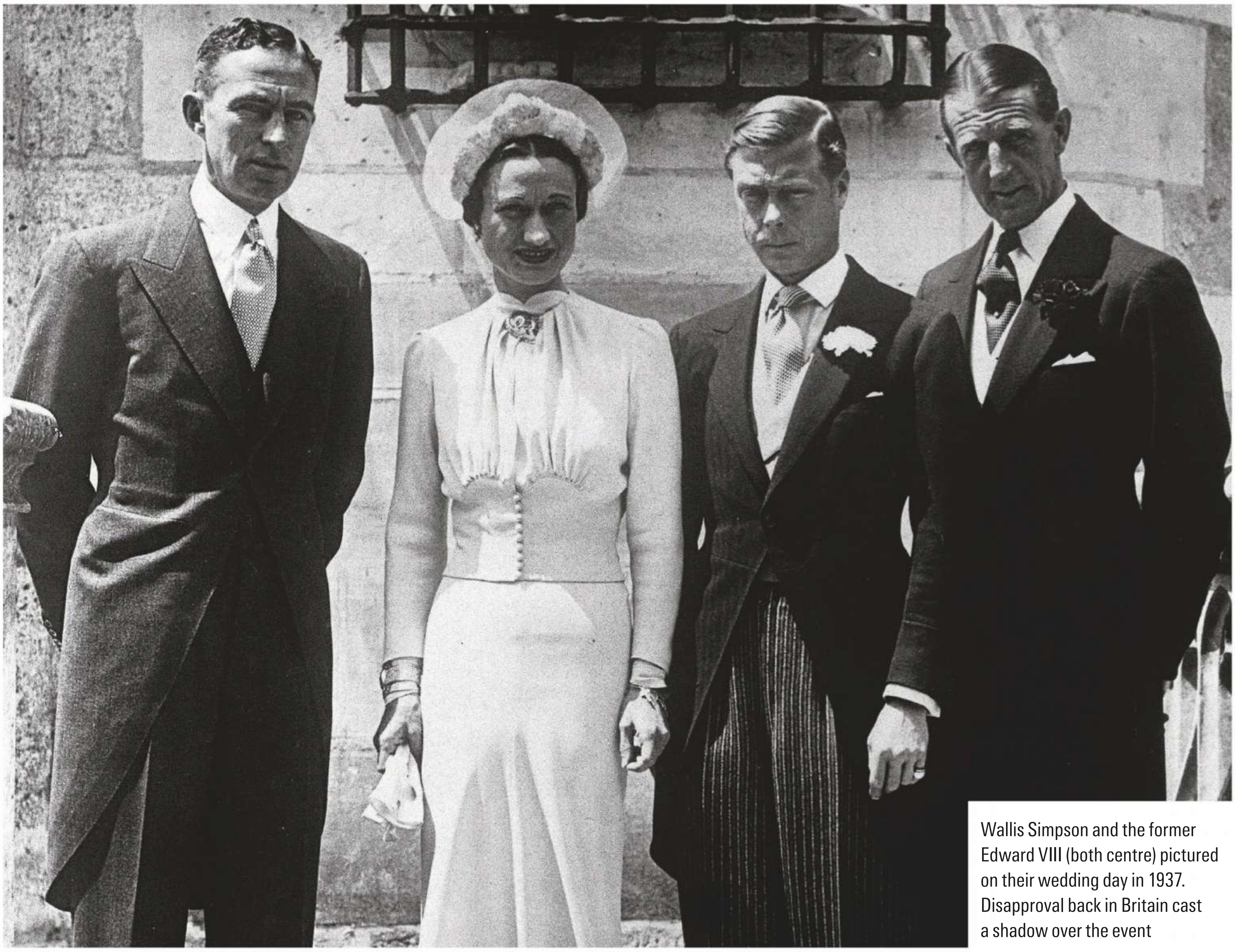
The irony, though, is that despite Little Bighorn's fabled place in American history, it changed nothing. The railroads did more damage to the Sioux way of life than Custer ever could. But the battle's name will last forever, as one of the supreme symbols of a vanished age.

28 JUNE 1846

Having devised instruments such as the saxhorn and the saxotromba, Belgian inventor **Adolphe Sax hits the jackpot** with his patent for a single-reed instrument made of brass. Once again he names it after himself – the saxophone.

18 JUNE 860

For Constantinople, capital of the mighty Byzantine empire, the day brings '**a thunderbolt from heaven**'. Some 200 ships belonging to the Rus, who had travelled from the Baltic, sail down the Bosphorus, burn suburbs and attack local residents.



Wallis Simpson and the former Edward VIII (both centre) pictured on their wedding day in 1937. Disapproval back in Britain cast a shadow over the event

3 JUNE 1937

Wallis and Edward throw a not-so royal wedding

The pair finally marry after Edward's abdication

Today it seems unimaginable that a member of the House of Windsor would relinquish his royal duties after falling in love with an American divorcee. But things were very different in the 1930s.

On 3 June 1937, six months after Edward VIII had abdicated the British throne in order to marry the woman he loved, he was united, once and for all, with Wallis Simpson. The venue was the Chateau de Candé, near Tours, which was owned by the half-American millionaire Charles Bedaux.

But despite the glamorous location, it was not quite the star-spangled occasion for which the couple might have hoped. For one thing, the Church of England refused to sanction the wedding, so they found it very hard to get hold of a priest. In the end, a left-leaning Darlington vicar, Robert Anderson Jardine, agreed to do it, sailing across the Channel specifically.

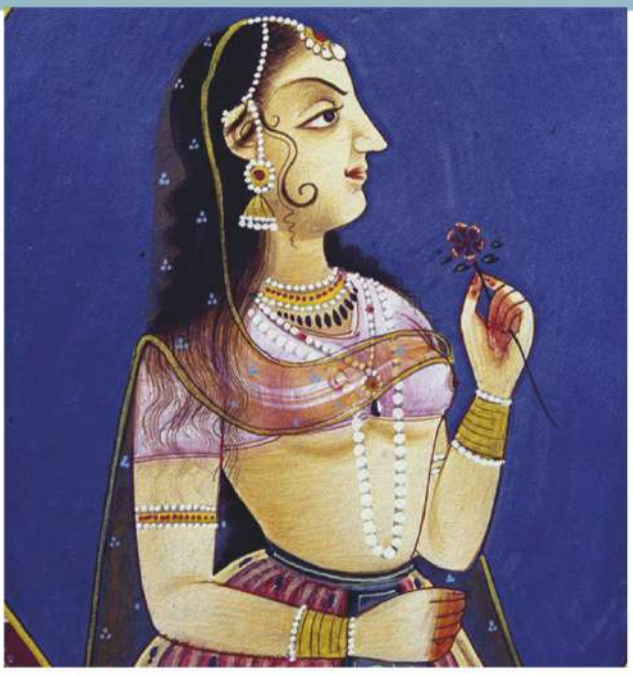
Unfortunately, this was not a good career move for Jardine. When he returned to the North East, his local vestry committee resigned in protest. He ended up emigrating to California.

Back, though, to the big day. Optimistically, the organisers put out lots of chairs, but in the end fewer than 20 people turned up. Edward had hoped that his brothers, the dukes of Kent and Gloucester, would show their support, but the new king, George VI, said no. His mother, Queen Mary, was outraged that Edward dared to get married on his late father's birthday, so that cast a bit of a shadow, too.

The outstandingly drunken Randolph Churchill did turn up, though. As did the best man. In a touch that defies parody, his name was Fruity Metcalfe, and he was a member of the British Union of Fascists.

Still, the bride and groom were happy enough. Wallis wore a very glamorous pale blue wedding dress and an engagement ring engraved with the words 'We are ours now'.

GETTY IMAGES



Mumtaz Mahal, wife of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan

17 JUNE 1631

Mughal empress's death inspires the Taj Mahal

A mighty mausoleum is built for Mumtaz Mahal

In the city of Burhanpur, in the centre of modern India, stands a ruined palace, the Shahi Qila. You can still see its splendid royal bath, with its magnificent carved ceiling. It is easy to see why, in the summer of 1631, the Mughal empress Mumtaz Mahal chose this room to give birth to her 14th child.

Little is known of Mumtaz Mahal. A daughter of the Persian nobility, she was born Arjumand Banu Begum in 1593, and was betrothed to the Mughal prince Khurram when she was just 14. By all accounts she was a bright and elegant young woman, who could read Arabic and Persian and wrote her own verses. Her husband, who became emperor under the name Shah Jahan in 1628, was said to adore her, and gave her the name Mumtaz Mahal, 'the exalted one of the palace'. "The friendship and concord between them had reached such an extent, the like of which has never been known between a husband and wife," wrote one court historian.

But then tragedy struck. Although Mumtaz Mahal's 14th child was born healthy, the labour was too much for her, and on 17 June she died. It was a sad story – but she left an extraordinary architectural legacy. The following year, work began on a mausoleum for her in the city of Agra, built of white marble. Today it is one of the most famous buildings in the world – the Taj Mahal. **H**

Dominic Sandbrook is a historian. His latest book is *Who Dares Wins: Britain, 1979–1982* (Allen Lane, 2019)

GETTY IMAGES/AKG IMAGES

WHY WE SHOULD REMEMBER…

When Cortés's conquistadors were forced to flee the Aztec capital

BY **AMY FULLER**

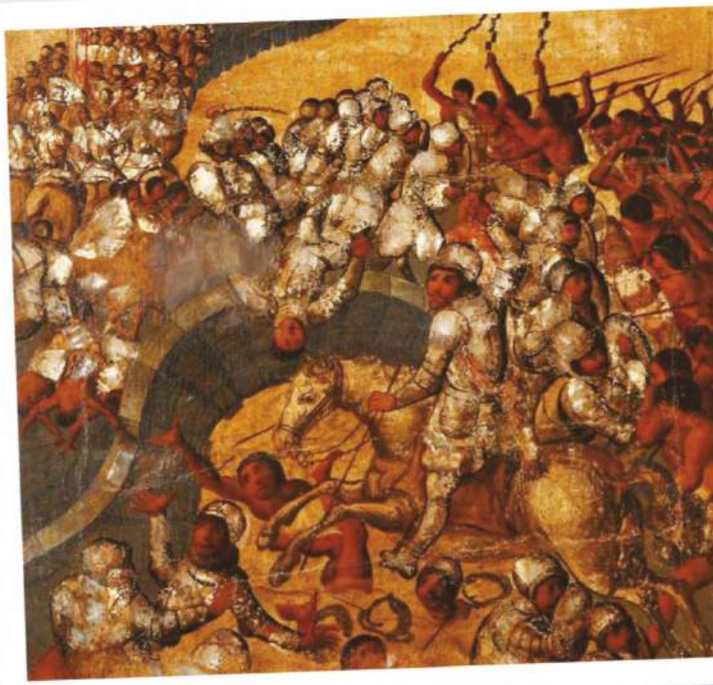
Five hundred years ago, on the night of 30 June 1520, Spanish forces and their allies fled from the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan under attack. Known as *La Noche Triste* (Night of Sorrows), this shameful retreat marked a key moment in the conquest – or, as it should more accurately be called, invasion – of Mexico.

The Spanish were led by Hernán Cortés, whose illegal expedition had begun in February 1519. Cortés had left Cuba against the direct orders of his superior, Diego Velázquez, and evaded arrest several times. He had forged alliances with several indigenous groups, including the Tlaxcalans, who were enemies of the Aztecs. In November, the Spaniards reached Tenochtitlan, where they were received peacefully by Moctezuma II. However, they soon took the emperor hostage as a puppet ruler. Meanwhile, Velázquez sent a force of 1,100 men, led by Pánfilo de Narváez, to arrest Cortés, landing in Veracruz in April 1520. Cortés headed out to face them with only 226 soldiers, but he captured Narváez in a surprise attack and persuaded his men to join the mission to conquer Tenochtitlan.

In Cortés's absence, the situation started to unravel at Tenochtitlan. Apparently afraid of an uprising (though only according to Spanish sources), Pedro de Alvarado, who had been left in charge, ordered the massacre of thousands of celebrants taking part in the sacred Toxcatl festival. This greatly diminished the Aztec forces, but meant that any pretence of friendship was over. Moctezuma lost all support: he was no longer a useful hostage, let alone able to continue his reign.

> "The Spaniards' only choice was to escape, or die. They left at midnight, loaded with gold"

Cortés returned to a compound under siege. The Spaniards forced Moctezuma to make a rooftop appeal to his people, but he was pelted with rocks and most likely then murdered by the conquistadors. Bridges had been raised by the Aztecs to cut off a Spanish retreat, and provisions were low; the only choice was to escape to their allies in Tlaxcala, or die. The Spaniards left at midnight, loaded with gold, but were discovered and fiercely attacked. According to some sources, many were so laden with treasure that a bridge was created by bodies piling up in the canal. Overall, around 860 Spanish soldiers, five Spanish women and more than 1,000 Tlaxcalan warriors lost their lives.



The Spanish flee Tenochtitlan under fierce fire during *La Noche Triste*

Moctezuma has been vilified for his so-called 'weak' leadership, but *La Noche Triste* shows how sound his decision was to invite the conquistadors into the city. Contained within Tenochtitlan and reliant upon the Aztecs' hospitality, the Spaniards' powers were limited. It's also important to remember that the indigenous allies were crucial; not only in military terms, but also to the Spaniards' ability to recover, regroup and return to lay siege to the Aztec capital the following year. In fact, we can question whether the conquistadors were mere players in a war between indigenous rivals. **H**

Amy Fuller is a lecturer in the history of the Americas at Nottingham Trent University

HIDDEN HISTORIES

DAVID OLUSOGA explores lesser-known stories from our past

"Leper hospitals had visitors – a far cry from modern clinical isolation"

In the three centuries after 1000 AD, a terrible disease took hold in Europe. Across the British Isles hundreds of hospitals of various sizes were built to house those afflicted by it. During the medieval period this dreaded condition was known as lepra. We know it today as leprosy, although modern doctors prefer to use its clinical name: Hansen's Disease, after Gerhard Hansen, the Norwegian doctor who discovered that leprosy is caused by a bacterial infection.

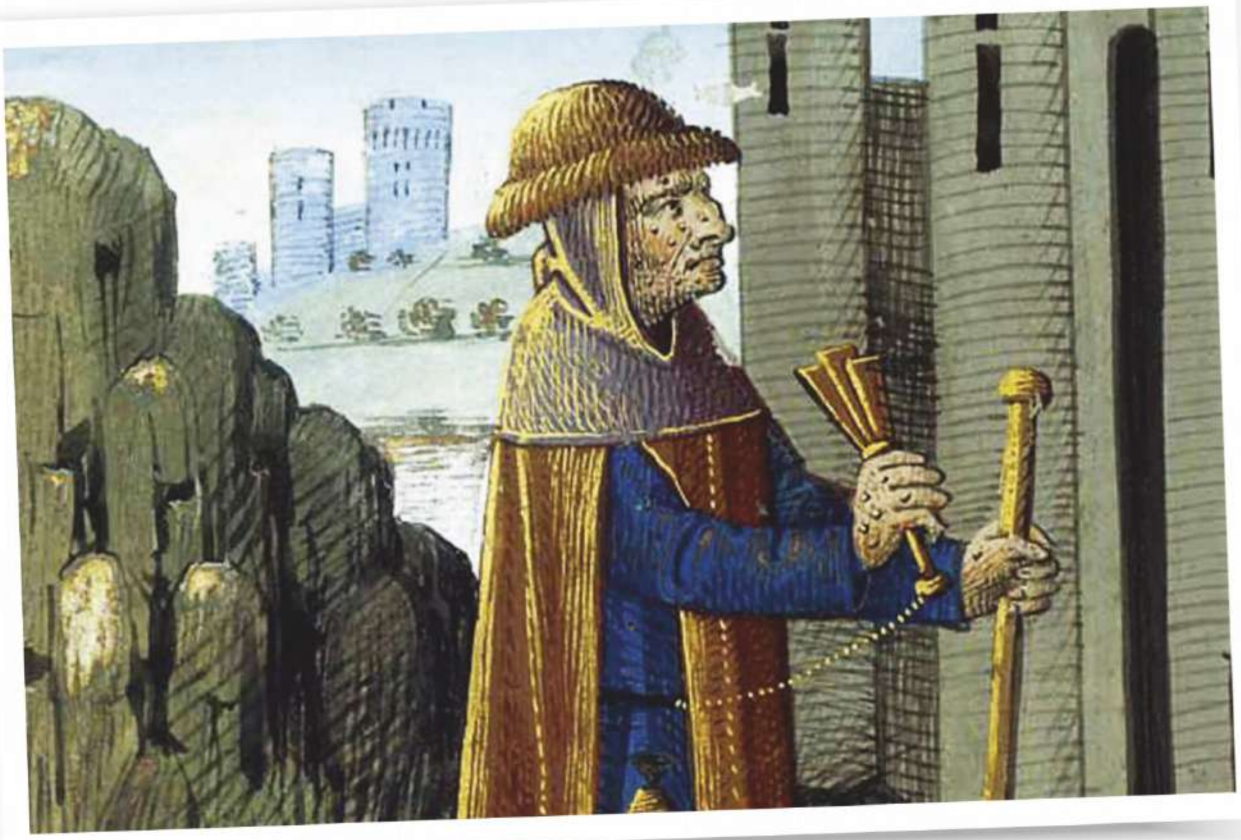
Many of our notions as to how those who contracted leprosy in the past were treated, and how they were regarded by those around them, come to us via Victorian writers, who were themselves living through an age of endemic and epidemic disease. As cholera, typhus and TB tore across the world, notions of contagion rapidly evolved, as did a developing understanding of the germ theory of disease transmission. Victorian historians, it seems, imposed some of their own anxieties on to the past. From that mindset came the presumption that medieval society had responded to leprosy by extricating its victims from society and strictly imprisoning them within leper hospitals. As the work of historians such as Carole Rawcliffe has shown, the reality was more complex and more surprising.

By the middle of the 14th century, around 300 leper hospitals had been established in England alone. Many were destroyed during the dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530s. The Hospital of St Nicholas in Harbledown, built around 1084 just outside of the city of Canterbury, is one of the few that still stands today. Yet people suffering from only mild symptoms of leprosy were not immediately sent to such institutions. Only as their condition deteriorated, which often led to deformation of the face and hands, were they required to move into leper hospitals. This did not mean that they were completely isolated and ostracised, however. Leper hospitals were seldom in remote locations. Nor were their inmates confined within their walls. Typically they were sited on the edge of town, often just beyond the city gates. Many were built on major roads, beside which their inmates sometimes begged passing travellers for alms, which they used to buy food from local markets. And while medieval sufferers were required to live separately, most leper hospitals allowed family members and friends to pay visits. All a far cry from modern notions of clinical isolation.

To the medieval mind, leprosy and lepers were understood primarily through the prism of the Christian faith. The disease is referenced on numerous occasions within the Old Testament, those suffering from it defined as 'unclean' in the book of Leviticus. Yet, in the New Testament, Christ broke that taboo. He laid hands on those suffering from the disease, treating them with compassion and healing their wounds. The association between Christ and lepers became so strong that in some artistic depictions of Christ's suffering, flogging, and crucifixion, his skin was portrayed marked with leprosy-like sores.

While leprosy was viewed as a curse it was also, in one sense, regarded as something of a blessing. In a belief system that judged everyone a sinner, it was assumed that those suffering from leprosy were being punished. However, by enduring their punishments during their earthly lives, it was thought that after death the souls of lepers would spend less time in purgatory before being admitted to heaven. The wealthy benefactors who often helped found leper hospitals believed that, by giving alms to lepers, and by asking the inhabitants of the hospitals to pray for them, they too might reduce the time their own souls were condemned to purgatory. It was not until the Black Death, which swept Europe in the mid-14th century, that deeper fears of contagion led to the imposition of stricter regimes of isolation for the inmates of the leper hospitals. H

David Olusoga is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. He presents *A House Through Time*, which is set to return to BBC Two in late May



Changing symptoms

A 15th-century depiction of a man with leprosy. Understood in the medieval period through a religious lens, the disease later came to reflect Victorian medical anxieties

AKG-IMAGES

Our new stamp collection features souvenirs saluting those who served our country as we mark 75 years since the end of the Second World War.

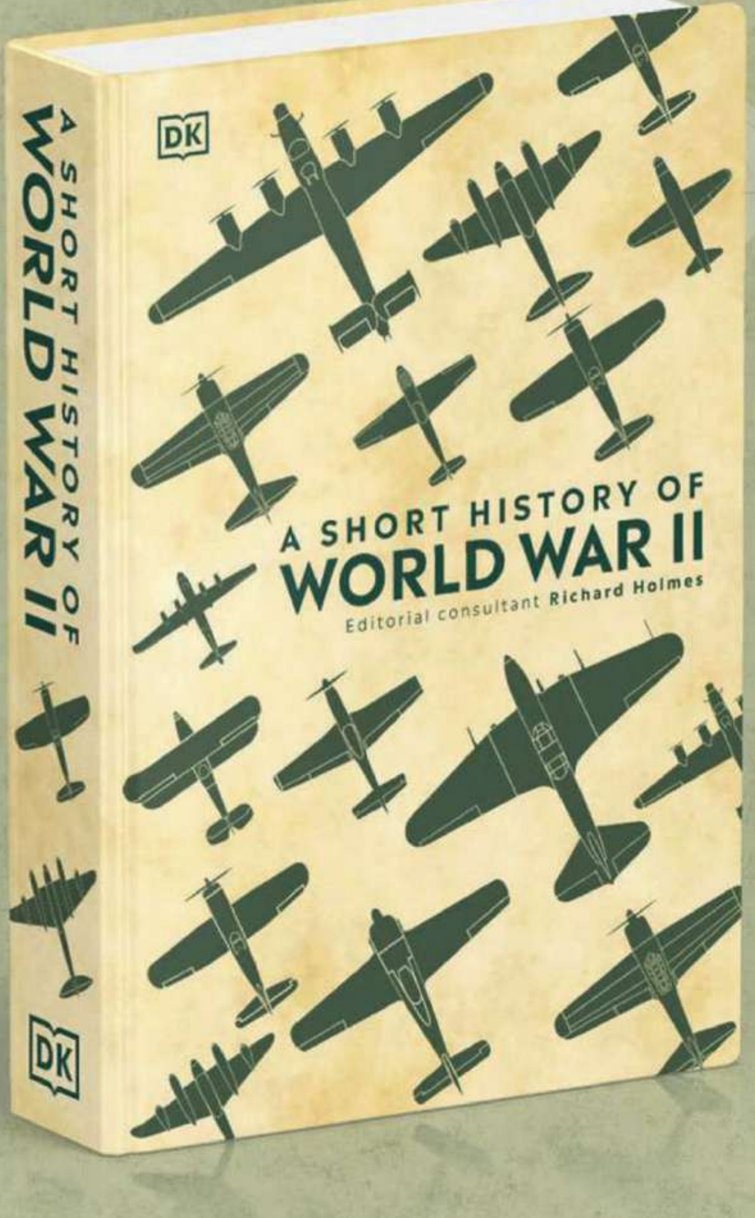
END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR
IN REMEMBRANCE END OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR
VICTORY
1945 – 2020
Troops parade at end of war, 1945
Nurses celebrate, 1945

Discover stamps featuring memorials in the UK, Jerusalem and Rangoon honouring service personnel and victims of the Holocaust, and limited edition coin covers produced in collaboration with the Royal Mint.

Search for End of Second World War stamps and collectibles

Royal Mail

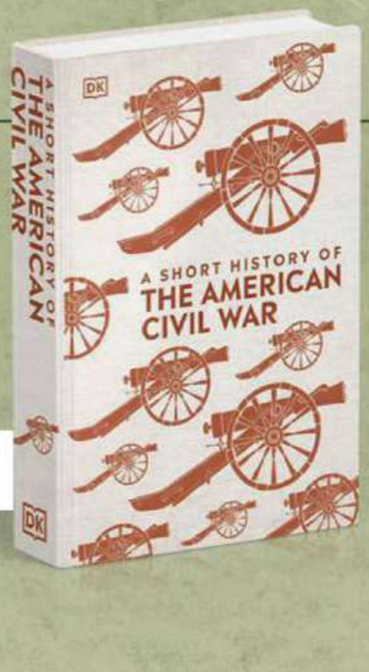
DK


DK
A SHORT HISTORY OF WORLD WAR II
Editorial consultant Richard Holmes

DISCOVER THE EPIC CONFLICT

THAT SHAPED THE MODERN WORLD

Available now wherever books are sold


A SHORT HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR
DK

ALSO AVAILABLE

LETTERS

Harold Wilson was a flawed prime minister, argues reader Ted Hirst

LETTER OF THE MONTH

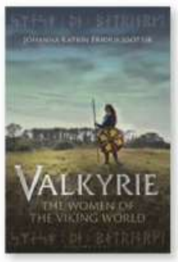
All smiles?

Lucy Worsley's interview in your May issue (*Encounters*) argues that photography has been essential to the survival of our royal family. But photography has only been helpful when the royals themselves have controlled what is photographed and have been able to promote a positive image.

It has not been helpful – in fact, very destructive – when some members of the royal family have been caught in unflattering situations by paparazzi and others. It is therefore interesting to note that a forthcoming exhibition at Kensington Palace is entitled *Life Through a Royal Lens*. That will surely offer something quite different to what an exhibition of *Royal Lives Through a Lens* might look like.

Ian MacDonald, Essex

The Queen and members of her family photographed in 2017. Yet not all images have shown the royals in such a positive light over the years



We reward the *Letter of the Month* writer with a copy of a new history book. This issue, that is **Valkyrie: The Women of the Viking World** by Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir. You can read our review of the book on page 74

Why the Nazis lost

In your interesting *Why Did the Allies Win WWII?* debate (May), a better question to pose might have been: "Why did Germany lose WWII?" Here, as in most cases, the outcome was determined by which side had the strongest economic and logistical capacity. History is full of examples where the losers win most of the battles but ultimately collapse because of materiel shortages resulting from combinations of poor organisation, low industrialisation levels and international isolation.

Despite acquiring huge economic assets by 1940, the Nazis squandered them by imposing idiotic ideological practices. These included looting machine tools from factories, disdaining industrialisation (especially in refusing to embrace modern mass-production methods), and relying on inefficient slave labour. Even the relatively small British armaments industry was out-producing the Nazi empire in 1941, and Britain was further supported by American Lend-Lease products.

Harsh treatment and food shortages resulting from fixing German food prices ensured that even European 'volunteer' workers did not perform to their full potential. Instead, the hungry and resentful workforce sabotaged the production process whenever opportunities arose. For example, the French-made trucks in Wehrmacht service often broke down at the front, in some cases because their dipsticks were too short. The Nazis could never win a long war with their peculiar mindset, and their failure to seize most Soviet economic resources in 1941 meant that, even with a good campaigning year in 1942, any chance of winning was already negligible.

Anthony J Cumming, Paignton

Wilson's no hero

Jason Watkins is rather selective in his hero worship of Harold Wilson (*My History Hero*, May). Wilson closed more pits than Margaret Thatcher did and many hundreds of railway stations. I lived through those times and saw first-hand the effect it all had.

Ted Hirst, Sheffield

Contrary on Mary

A few years ago in this magazine, in an article that argued for a re-evaluation of Mary Tudor, Anna Whitlock wrote "even the burnings – the accepted punishment for heresy at the time – were, it has been argued, broadly effective" (*Bloody Mary's Revolution*, Christmas 2014). More recently, in the April issue (*Mary: Brutal but Brilliant*), Alexander Samson says that burnings were a "ubiquitous" practice and that "Mary's campaign of persecution may have been brutal, but it had the desired effect". In other words, everyone did it and what's more, it worked.

To misquote Wilde, to have *one* article restoring the reputation of a monarch by justifying the horrible things she did is unfortunate, but to have *two* looks like carelessness. Or to misquote Marx, historians repeat themselves, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce. The broader point of 'myth-busting' is one thing, but attempting to justify the unjustifiable is not a good idea. Mary did what she did and we should accept that, whether it makes her a 'hero' or 'villain'.

Peter Kerry, Stockport

Singing together

I enjoyed Michael Wood's article on English radical folk songs (*Opinion*, May), and it reminded me of singing folk songs while at primary school in the 1960s. As a class we listened to a programme called *Singing Together* and would hear traditional tunes such as *Blow the Man Down; Soldier, Soldier, Won't You Marry Me* and *D'ye Ken John Peel?*

Although the talk that Michael Wood was planning on the subject has been cancelled for the time being, I hope he will be able to deliver it eventually. This could also make for a great BBC radio programme, as I would love to hear renditions of the songs he mentioned.

Norma Postin, Rugby

In praise of Jimmy Carter

I write in response to Dominic Sandbrook's criticism of Jimmy Carter (*Letters*, April). As far as Carter's current ranking in a list of American presidents, he definitely can not be considered among the worst. He was president during a very difficult time and managed to have quite a few successes. He created the modern vice presidency, by making Walter Mondale a partner, unlike his predecessors. He had many foreign policy wins: SALT II, turning over the Panama Canal to the Panamanians, and the Camp David Accords. He established a model, rarely followed by his successors, of altruism and honest brokerage across the world.

Françoise Duchêne, Ohio

A sweet moment

The article *The Bloodbath and the Bomb* (April) about the horrific battle of Okinawa and the atomic bombings of Japan reminded

GETTY IMAGES

A Soviet forced labourer in a German factory, c1943. Reader Anthony J Cumming argues that Nazi mistreatment of such workers was instrumental in their eventual defeat

me of a touching story that an elderly Japanese student told me a few years ago.

He had been a small boy at the war's end, and he and his friends were understandably warned to keep away from the occupying American troops. However, the children's natural curiosity won out, and they followed a GI on patrol from a distance. Realising this, the GI slowed down until the children caught up, and then gave them some chocolate!

Jeremy Rhodes, Osaka

Overjoyed by the bomb

It was not just American soldiers who cheered the dropping of the atom bomb in 1945. My step-father-in-law was fighting the Japanese in Burma in what he described as a cruel and brutal ongoing battle. He and his comrades were overjoyed to hear the news, as it meant they would survive and make it back home.

Jonathan Pearsall, Essex

Dennis the menace?

THE WORLD WAR TWO SPIES WHO INSPIRED BOND
HISTORY
QUEEN MARY
Bloody or brilliant?
Wolf Hall's final act
MEDIEVAL SCOTLAND'S CRY FOR FREEDOM
Sex, scandal and stalkers
Okinawa

Since we are living in difficult times, I thought your readers may find my wife's light-hearted comment about your April magazine front cover (left) quite amusing.

I was sat in my favourite chair with a cup of tea, and a copy of your magazine in hand, when my wife said to me: "Why is there a picture of Dennis Waterman on the front cover?" I have to say, from a certain angle it does look like the famous actor!

Chris Goodlad, Chesterfield

WRITE TO US

We welcome your letters, while reserving the right to edit them. We may publish your letters on our website. Please include a daytime phone number and, if emailing, a postal address (not for publication). Letters should be no longer than 250 words.
email: *letters@historyextra.com* **Post:** Our office is currently closed so unfortunately we can only receive email communication at this time

The opinions expressed by our commentators are their own and may not represent the views of *BBC History Magazine* or the Immediate Media Company

GETTY IMAGES

BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE

EDITORIAL
Editor Rob Attar *robertattar@historyextra.com*
World history editor Matt Elton *mattelton@historyextra.com*
Production editor Spencer Mizen
Section editors Ellie Cawthorne and Jon Bauckham
Picture editor Samantha Nott *samnott@historyextra.com*
Deputy picture editor Katherine Mitchell
Group art editor Susanne Frank
Senior deputy art editor Rachel Dickens
Art editor, special editions Sarah Lambert
Digital editor Emma Mason *emmamason@historyextra.com*
Deputy digital editor Elinor Evans
Digital editorial assistant Rachel Dinning

ADVERTISING & MARKETING
Advertising manager
Sam Jones 0117 300 8145
Sam.Jones@immediate.co.uk
Business development manager
Kate Chetwynd-Lawton 0117 300 8532
Brand sales executive
Max Spalton 0117 300 8530
Classified sales manager
Rebecca Janyshiwskyj
Classified sales executive
Alexander Armstrong 0117 300 8538
Alex.Armstrong@immediate.co.uk
Group direct marketing manager
Laurence Robertson 00353 5787 57444
Subscriptions director Jacky Perales-Morris
Subscriptions marketing manager
Natalie Lawrence
US representative Kate Buckley
buckley@buckleypell.com

PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS
PR manager Emma Cooney 0117 300 8507
Emma.Cooney@immediate.co.uk

SYNDICATION
Director of licensing & syndication Tim Hudson
International partners' manager Anna Brown

HISTORYEXTRA PODCAST
Podcast producer Ben Youatt
Podcast assistant Jack Bateman

PRODUCTION
Production director Sarah Powell
Production co-ordinator Emily Mounter
Ad co-ordinator Jade O'Halloran
Ad designer Julia Young

IMMEDIATE MEDIA COMPANY
Content director David Musgrove
Commercial director Jemima Dixon
Managing director Andy Healy
Group managing director Andy Marshall
CEO Tom Bureau

BBC STUDIOS, UK PUBLISHING
Managing Director, Consumer Products and Licensing Stephen Davies
Head of publishing Mandy Thwaites
Compliance manager Cameron McEwan
Chair, Editorial Review Boards Nicholas Brett
UK publishing coordinator Eva Abramik
(uk.publishing@bbc.com)

IMMEDIATE MEDIA Co

Vol 21 No 6 June 2020
BBC History Magazine is published by Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited under licence from BBC Studios who help fund new BBC programmes.

BBC History Magazine was established to publish authoritative history, written by leading experts, in an accessible and attractive format. We seek to maintain the high journalistic standards traditionally associated with the BBC.

© Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited, 2020 – ISSN: 1469 8552
Not for resale. All rights reserved. Unauthorised reproduction in whole or part is prohibited without written permission. Every effort has been made to secure permission for copyright material. In the event of any material being used inadvertently, or where it proved impossible to trace the copyright owner, acknowledgement will be made in a future issue. MSS, photographs and artwork are accepted on the basis that *BBC History Magazine* and its agents do not accept liability for loss or damage to same. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the publisher.

We abide by IPSO's rules and regulations. To give feedback about our magazines, please visit immediate.co.uk, email *editorialcomplaints@immediate.co.uk* or write to Katherine Conlon, Immediate Media Co., Vineyard House, 44 Brook Green, London W6 7BT.

Immediate Media Company is working to ensure that all of its paper is sourced from well-managed forests. This magazine can be recycled, for use in newspapers and packaging. Please remove any gifts, samples or wrapping and dispose of it at your local collection point.

recycle
When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

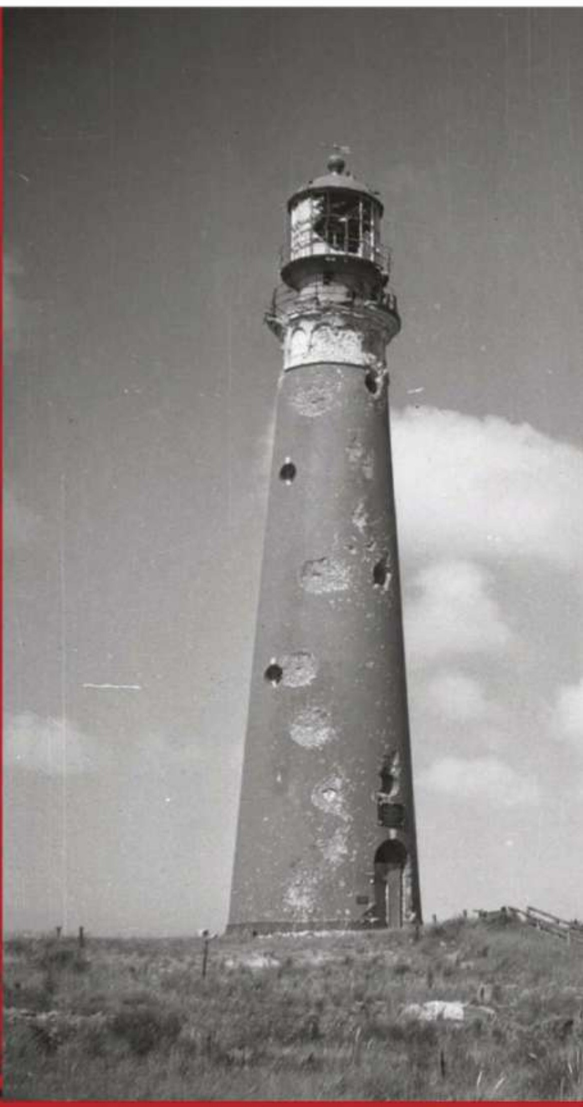
ipso. Regulated

abc Jan–Dec 2019 93,931

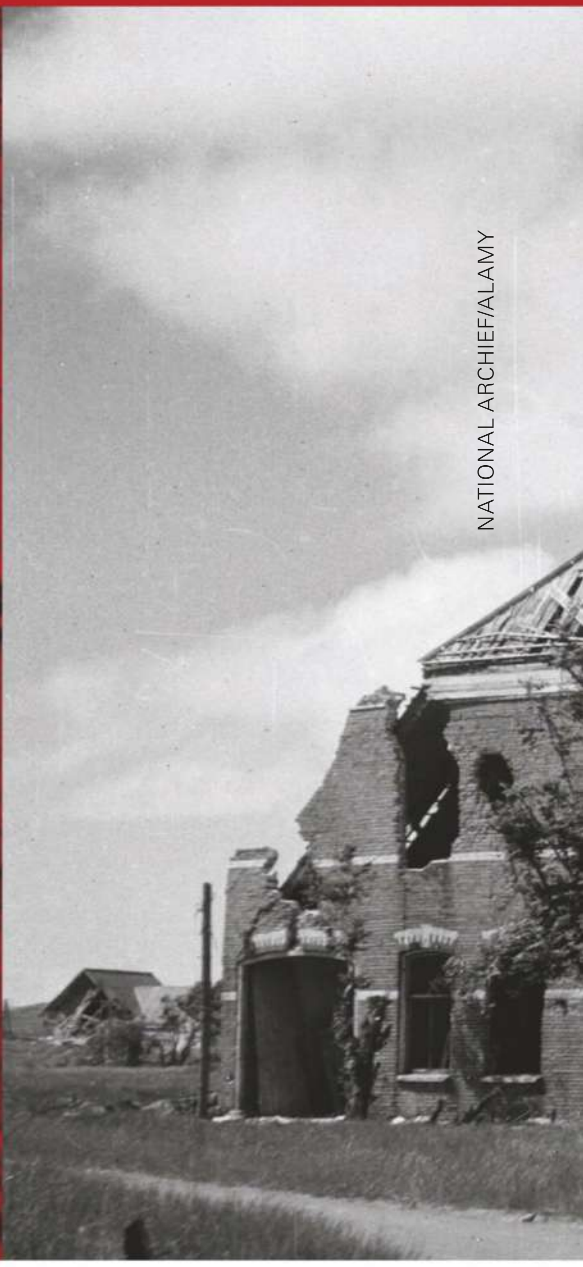
20th ANNIVERSARY OF BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE

Save when you **subscribe** to digital editions

See **page 44** for details

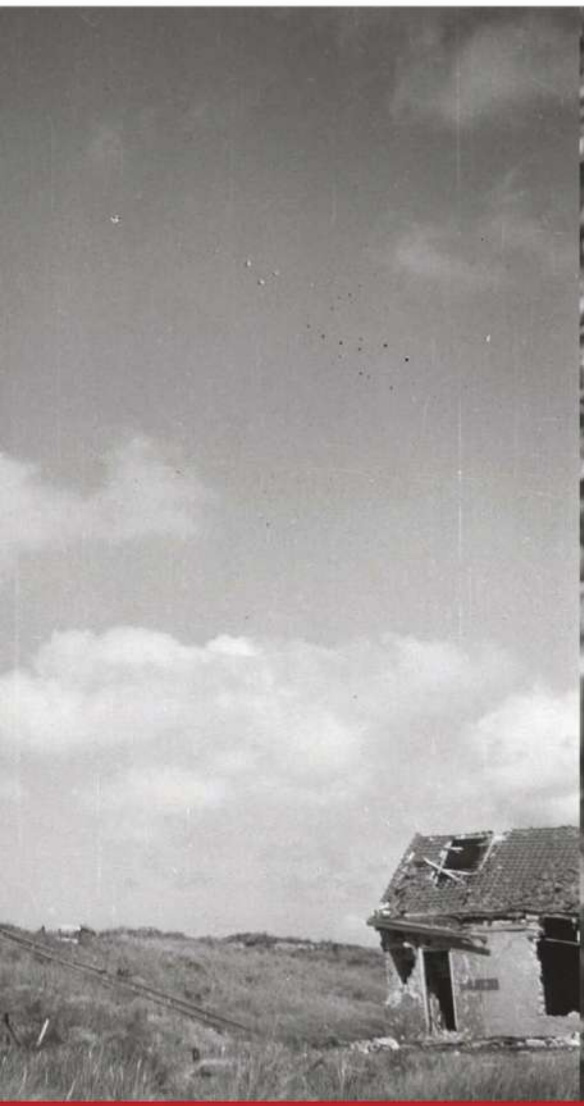


THE FIGHT TO THE END...



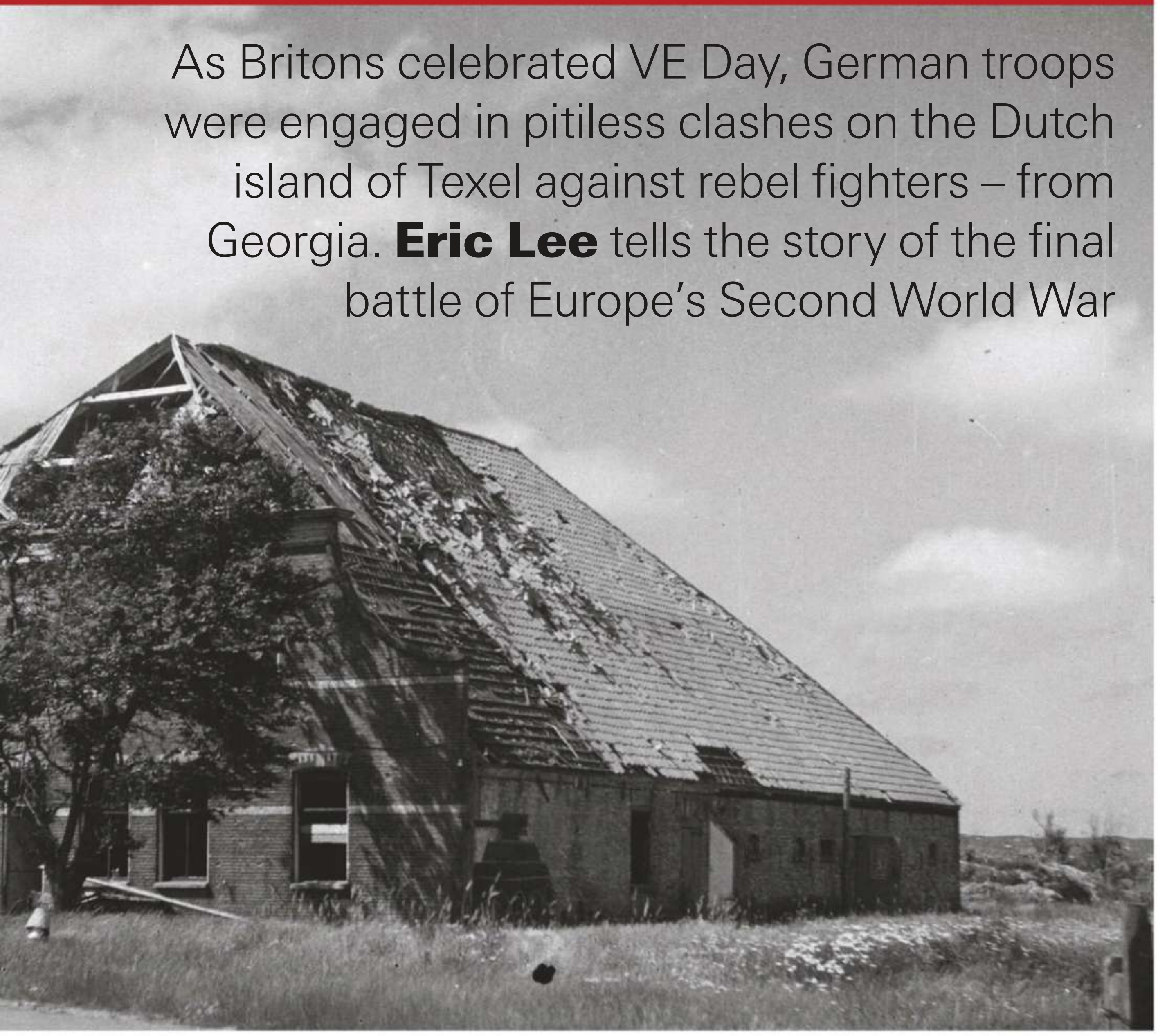
NATIONAL ARCHIEF/ALAMY

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: **Georgian volunteers to the German army in training during 1943. Hundreds had been given little choice but to join the Wehrmacht after being captured; The lighthouse at Texel's northern tip was the scene of the final clash of the battle for the island. Of the 120 Georgians defending the building, only eight survived; Wounded Georgian soldiers following the battle; A heavily damaged farm on Texel. Many Dutch civilians were killed by indiscriminate shelling**



AND BEYOND

As Britons celebrated VE Day, German troops were engaged in pitiless clashes on the Dutch island of Texel against rebel fighters – from Georgia. **Eric Lee** tells the story of the final battle of Europe's Second World War



In late April 1945, a squad of German troops encircled a farm on the Dutch island of Texel, briefly stopped to catch their breath, and then set about their gruesome work. First they set fire to the farmhouse, and then they waited for their quarry to emerge. They shot those who made the break for safety, and when others took refuge in a nearby pig shed, they set that ablaze too.

However, two men did manage to elude the Germans, taking temporary shelter in the farm's cellar, and later slipping away under cover of darkness. Exhausted, they hid themselves in a nearby ditch. The following morning, a farmer found them asleep, and alerted the marauding troops. They quickly arrived on the scene and put the fugitives to death. It was a grisly scene. And it was made all the more darkly bizarre by the fact that both the victims, and those doing the shooting, were wearing German uniforms.

So why would Wehrmacht troops inflict such brutalities on so-called 'comrades'? And why were they doing so during the death throes of the Third Reich – at a time when, across Europe, thousands of their compatriots were laying down their arms and surrendering?

The answer lies in the identity of the men they hunted down and killed. These victims may have worn German uniforms but they had no loyalty to the Wehrmacht. They were, in fact, former prisoners of war – Red Army men from Soviet Georgia who had switched sides. And the rebellion they had launched against German forces on Texel would trigger the final battle of Europe's Second World War.

A stark dilemma

The roots of the Texel rebellion lie not in Texel itself, but hundreds of miles away on the eastern front. For it was here, one day in April 1942, as the great battle raged between the forces of Bolshevism and Nazism, that about a thousand starving Soviet prisoners of war were paraded before their German captors and presented with the starkest of dilemmas. As one soldier later remembers it: "The German officers ordered all enemies of the Reich to step forward. Nobody stepped forward since this would have meant a bullet in the neck. It was then announced that the ceremony of induction into the German army was concluded."

The PoWs were being recruited into the German army, and those from Soviet Georgia were taken into the Georgian Legion of the Wehrmacht, which was initially deployed against Soviet forces.

But they proved to be unreliable fighters, defecting to the Soviet side at the first

opportunity in many cases. Hitler himself was sceptical about the Georgians. They "don't belong to the Turkish peoples," he lectured his generals, when comparing the different peoples of the Caucasus region of the USSR. "The Georgians are a Caucasian tribe that has nothing to do with the Turkish peoples. I regard only the Muslims as safe. All the others I consider unsafe."

After serving in Poland, the Georgian Legion was redeployed to western Europe, and by early 1945 the 822nd Battalion found itself posted to Texel, the largest of the Dutch Wadden islands off the country's north coast.

The Georgians soon became embroiled in plots with the local Dutch resistance. However, they initially had little else to do, as the war in the Netherlands was largely being fought in the eastern part of the country.

All that changed on 5 April 1945, when their commander, the German major Klaus Breitner, broke the news to them that they were to return to the mainland to fight against British and Canadian forces in Arnhem. The prospect of siding with the Germans against Allied forces at this stage of the war appalled many of the Georgians. And so that night, their leaders – headed by Lieutenant Shalva Loladze, a former Soviet air force pilot – met secretly to discuss their next move. They decided that they had no choice but to launch a rebellion.

The Georgians' plan was to strike hard and fast at the Germans that very night. They put that plan into action with brutal efficiency, using their knives, bayonets and razors to slash the throats of around 400 sleeping German soldiers in the barracks they shared.

Red flags flying

At first things seemed to be going well for the rebels. Their main strategic targets – the airfield, the ports, the lighthouse and the bunker complex that had served as the German headquarters in the main town of Den Burg – soon fell into Georgian hands. With Dutch and red flags flying over Den Burg, Loladze announced that Texel was now liberated. His men also issued a call to Dutch civilians to come and join them, and began handing out weapons to Dutch volunteers.

As Hans Verhoeven, then a 12-year-old boy on Texel, later recalled: "We had indeed heard gunfire during the night but thought they were on exercise again. But when two Russians [sic] walked into the school playground and fired their rifles triumphantly into the air, shouting that all the Germans were 'kaput', we realised that something incredible had happened."

But the celebrations proved to be premature. Despite all they had achieved, the Georgians had failed to take the naval batteries on the northern and southern ends of the island. And they hadn't killed their German commander, Major Breitner, who had spent the night not in the barracks, but with his mistress in town. Breitner was able to send a message to Berlin informing Hitler about the "treason" of the Georgians. Hitler's response came swiftly: kill them all.

At that, the naval batteries turned their guns inland and began to pound the areas held by the Georgians, including Den Burg. Many Dutch civilians were killed in the indiscriminate shelling. Several were rounded up, suspected of helping the Georgians, and shot in cold blood by the Germans.

At the same time, German soldiers began to land on Texel, and to start hunting down the rebels as they marched across the flat fields of Texel, heading north. One of the German troops, Fred Simon, was horrified by what he saw. "We found all of the German soldiers killed, their throats slit," he recalled. These sentiments were shared by the man charged with coordinating the German response. "We were very angry," wrote Klaus Breitner. "Everybody was furious about the way in which the rebels had killed our men." Soon that anger was fueling a thirst for revenge.

BOTH SIDES SHOT PRISONERS. THIS WAS THE WAR OF THE EASTERN FRONT, WHERE FEW RULES APPLIED AND NO MERCY WAS GRANTED

Lieutenant Shalva Loladze, leader of the Georgian uprising, announced that Texel had been liberated, but he was later killed by German troops

NATIONAL ARCHIEF/CC/GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY/ BPK BERLIN.

Reluctant comrades
German troops and a Georgian 'volunteer' in action in 1942 or 43. Georgian recruits to the Wehrmacht proved unreliable fighters and often defected back to the Red Army at the first opportunity

The Georgians retreated from Den Burg, concentrating on holding the airfield and the lighthouse. The airfield was particularly important – though unable to radio the Allies, the Georgians hoped that British troops would soon arrive to support them.

They could not have known that the British were well aware of what was unfolding on Texel. Not only were codebreakers at Bletchley Park intercepting German updates on the rebellion, four Georgians and a few Dutch civilians had escaped the island and sailed to the Norfolk coast, and were now apprising the British of the fighting.

But British support wasn't forthcoming. With Allied attention consumed by the drive towards Germany, Texel simply didn't register as a priority. The Georgians and their Dutch allies were left alone to face a ferocious German onslaught.

As the days wore on, the battle took on the character of partisan warfare. The surviving Georgians hid in Texel's small wooded areas, among the dunes and on farms. The Dutch helped many, though the locals betrayed some. The punishment for hiding Georgians was death, and the Germans were merciless.

The final battle took place on 20 April – a little over two weeks before the war in Europe came to an end – at the lighthouse on Texel's northern tip. With the Georgians barricaded into the building, the Germans deployed sappers from the Hermann Goering Division, who set explosives that engulfed the building in fire. German troops attacked Georgians fleeing the building with flamethrowers and burned them alive.

Grisha Baindurashvili was one of the few Georgian survivors from the battle. "The lighthouse collapsed," he said. "The whole place around us was on fire. And it was burning us. Out of 120 people, only eight survived. The rest were killed by fire."

Yet still the fighting continued. A few rebels escaped and scattered across the island. They had no incentive to surrender. Those who did so were ordered to strip off their Wehrmacht uniforms – the Germans considered them traitors, unworthy of wearing them – and shot. Nor did the Georgians take any German prisoners. This was the war of the eastern front, where few rules applied and no mercy was granted.

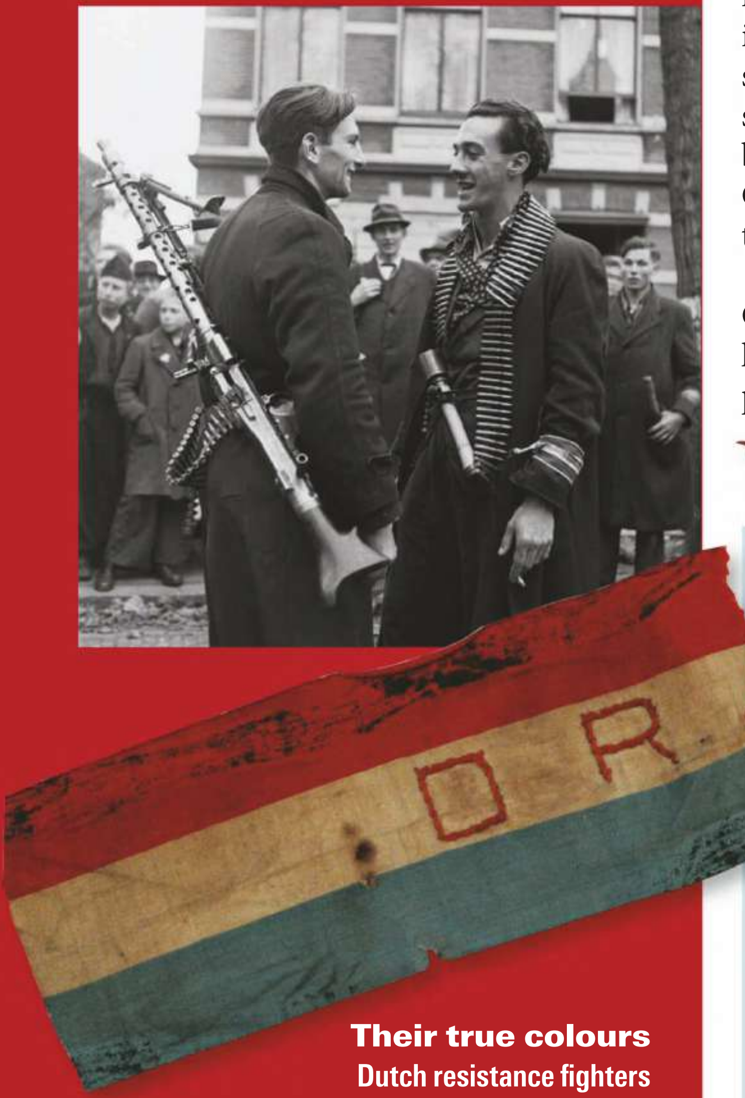
The hunt for the Georgian fugitives continued long after the war ended on 8 May. In fact it wasn't until 20 May, when Canadian troops landed on Texel, that the Germans laid down their arms.

Gathering up the dead

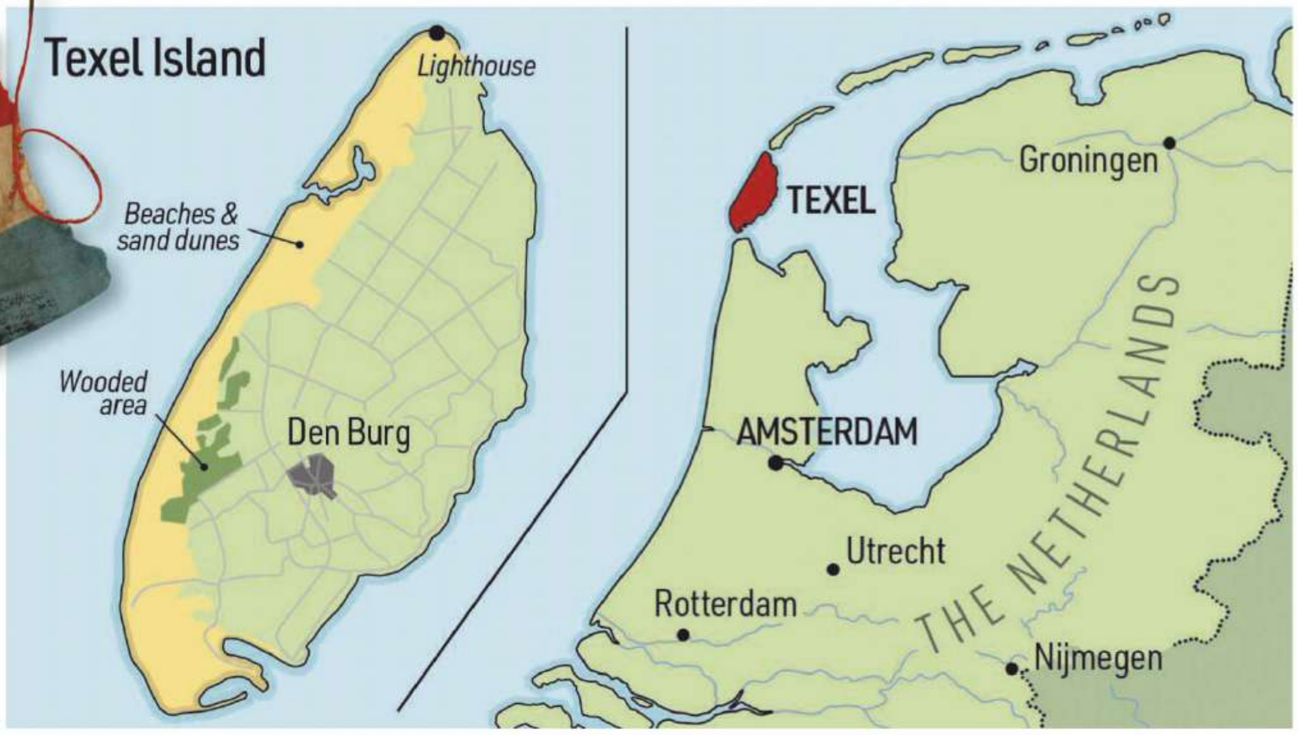
Though the Canadians swiftly removed the Germans from Texel, they allowed the Georgians to remain a little longer to gather up their dead. It was a grim task: of the more than 800 who had participated in the rebellion, only 228 were still alive. Lieutenant Shalva Loladze was among the dead.

And the survivors faced the most uncertain of futures. A number of writers speculated that Georgian war veterans were returned to the Soviet Union where they were either dispatched to the Gulags, or shot. It was reasonable to expect the survivors of the Texel uprising to suffer a similar fate. They had betrayed Stalin twice: first, by surrendering to the Germans at a time when Soviet soldiers were supposed to be fighting to the last bullet; second, by agreeing to join the German ranks, even if they'd had little choice in the matter.

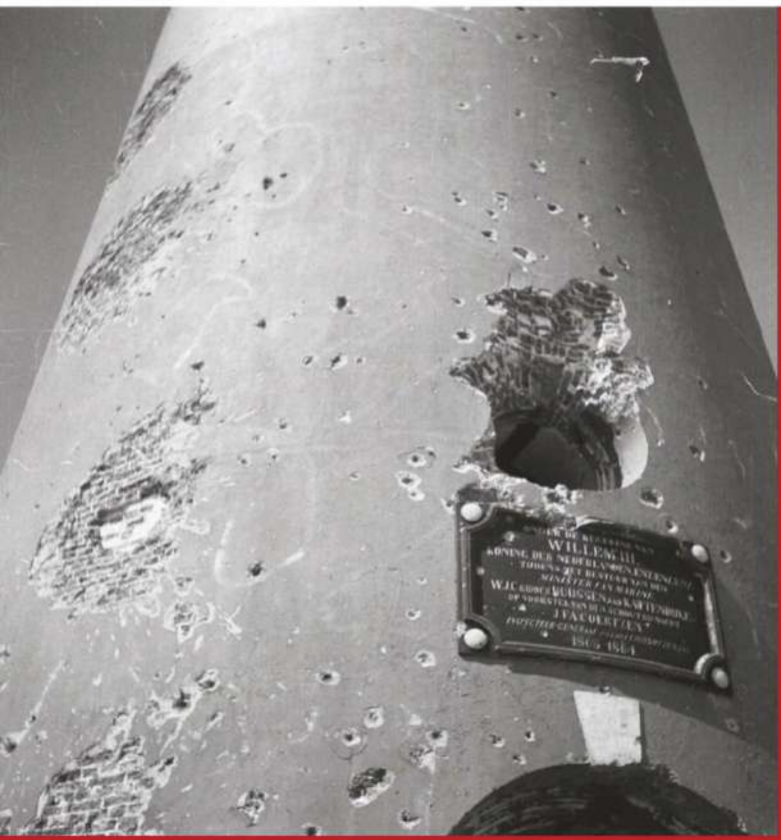
Other Soviet soldiers who had switched to the German side faced the severest of punishments upon their return home. After his capture by the Germans, General Andrey Andreyevich Vlasov had defected and led the pro-Nazi 'Russian Liberation Army'. He then

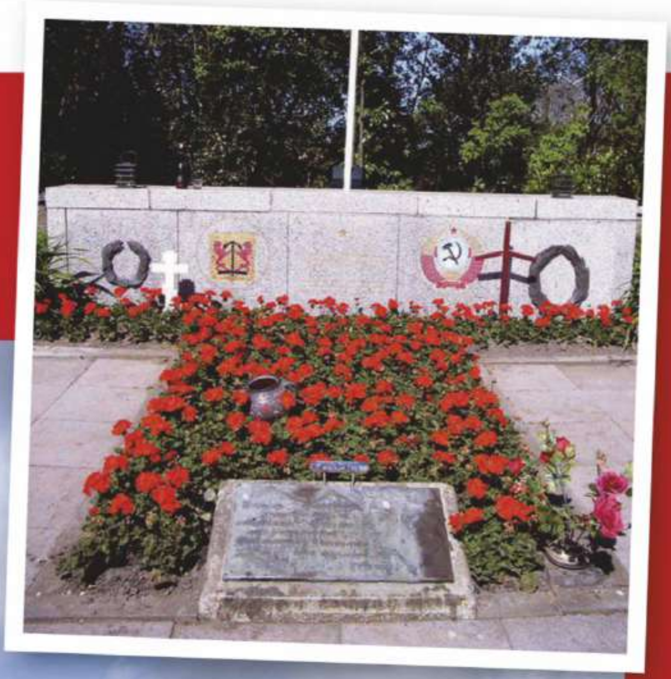


Their true colours
Dutch resistance fighters armed with captured German weapons, Breda, 1944, and (inset) the 'Oranje', the armband of the Dutch resistance. Many Dutch civilians rallied to the Georgians' call to arms on Texel



Our maps show the Dutch island of Texel, where the last battle of Europe's Second World War was fought





RIGHT: **The memorial to the battle for Texel in the island's Georgian military cemetery features the Soviet hammer and sickle, and a post-Soviet-era white cross**

ABOVE: **The De Cocksdorp lighthouse bears the scars of the battle for Texel, and (right) the lighthouse in 2013 in a landscape that shows few signs of the blood spilled on the island in spring 1945**

switched sides again, helping to liberate Prague from Nazi control at the end of the war. But that didn't save him. In 1946, Vlasov and 11 of his colleagues were court-martialled, found guilty of treason and hanged.

Yet the fate of the Texel survivors couldn't have been more different to the one suffered by Vlasov. Though most remained for a time in the Red Army, all were eventually returned to their homes in Georgia.

One strange case – though not directly related to the battle on Texel – was that of General Shalva Maglakelidze, the first commander of the Wehrmacht's Georgian Legion. When the war ended, Maglakelidze was not repatriated to the USSR. Instead, he wound up in West Germany where he worked as a military advisor to Chancellor Konrad Adenauer. In 1954, he was kidnapped by KGB agents in West Germany and taken back home. But instead of being punished, he was set free to live a quiet life in Soviet Georgia.

So why were the Georgians treated so leniently? Part of the explanation may lie in the letters that Allied generals such as Dwight D Eisenhower sent to the Soviets, testifying to their role fighting against the Germans. Another reason was a Soviet desire to engage with the Georgian emigre communities in an attempt to convince them to return home. And there was also the role of the Dutch communists, who attested to the heroism and patriotism of the Georgians on Texel.

The Texel uprising also became an important plank in the construction of a communist myth – one that celebrated those who had risen up against their Nazi oppressors. Soviet officials regularly came to Texel on the anniversary of the end of the war. By the late 1960s, the Soviet regime had even produced a feature film, *Crucified Island*, casting the Georgians as heroes. Such adulation, it has to be said, did not always sit well with the residents of Texel, who felt that the Georgians had risen up with little concern for the lives of innocent civilians.

THE TEXEL UPRISING WAS AN IMPORTANT PLANK IN A COMMUNIST MYTH – ONE THAT CELEBRATED THOSE WHO HAD DEFIED THE NAZIS

READ

You can read more about the Second World War in our recent special edition, **Great Battles of World War Two: Land Battles**.

GREAT BATTLES
OF WORLD WAR TWO
Volume One Land Battles

To order your copy, go to *buysubscriptions.com/landbattles*

Once Georgia regained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, the new country had to come to grips with a history that, under communist rule, had been skewed by a regime that, at best, had a casual relationship with the truth. But it adheres to the Soviet celebration of the rebellion on Texel, as was shown when the Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili visited the Georgian Military Cemetery on the island in 2005.

At the head of that cemetery are a number of symbols, marking the evolution of the memorialisation of the uprising. There's a monument displaying the symbol of Soviet Georgia (a hammer and sickle) and then, hailing from the post-communist period, a large white cross.

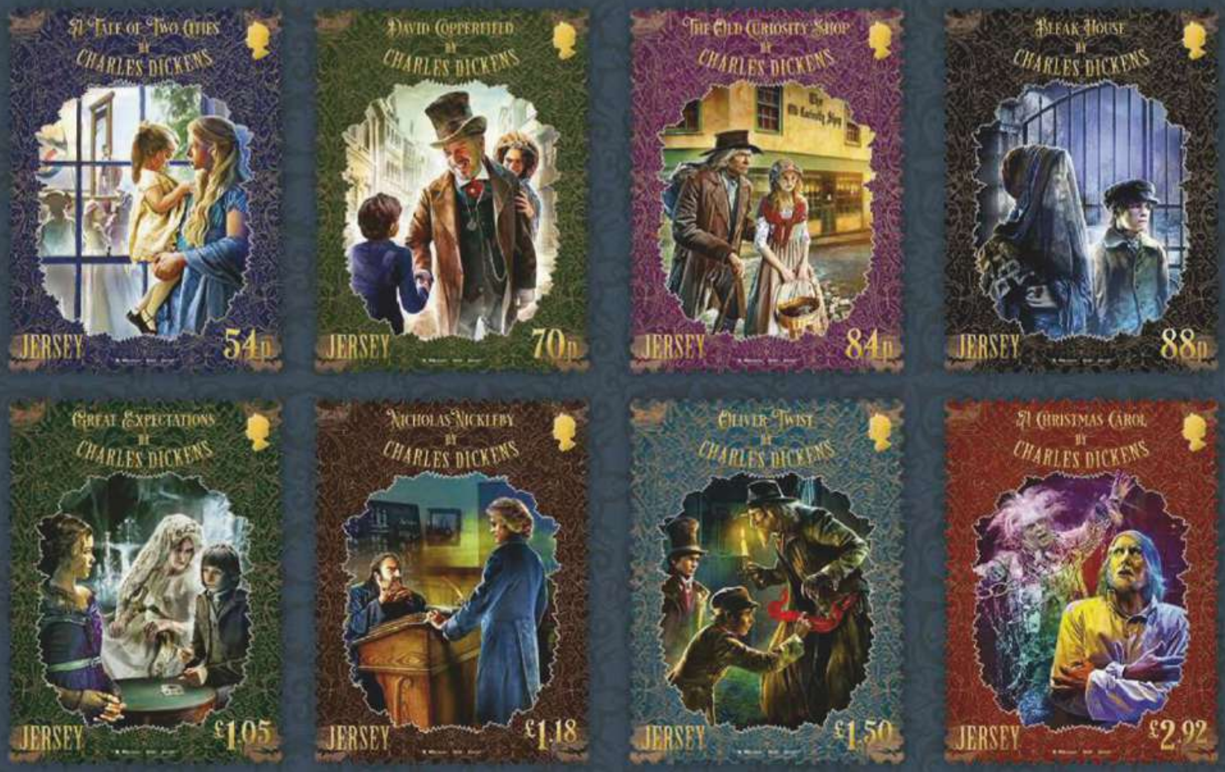
There's no ignoring the Texel uprising within the confines of the cemetery. Yet step outside and travel around this beautiful and peaceful island, and there is little to remind you of the horrors that took place in the spring of 1945 – the final battle of the Second World War in Europe. It was the bloody denouement of almost six years of conflict. And it's one that we should not forget. H

Eric Lee is a historian and author. His latest book is *Night of the Bayonets: The Texel Uprising and Hitler's Revenge, April-May 1945* (Greenhill, 2020)

ALAMY/SHUTTERSTOCK/FLICKR_INYUCHO

CHARLES DICKENS
1812-1870

Stamps and Souvenir Sheetlet available in specially designed Presentation Packs or affixed to First Day Cover Envelopes. £10.86 + VAT each


A Tale of Two Cities by Charles Dickens
Jersey 54p
David Copperfield by Charles Dickens
Jersey 70p
The Old Curiosity Shop by Charles Dickens
Jersey 84p
Bleak House by Charles Dickens
Jersey 88p
Great Expectations by Charles Dickens
Jersey £1.05
Nicholas Nickleby by Charles Dickens
Jersey £1.18
Oliver Twist by Charles Dickens
Jersey £1.50
A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens
Jersey £2.92

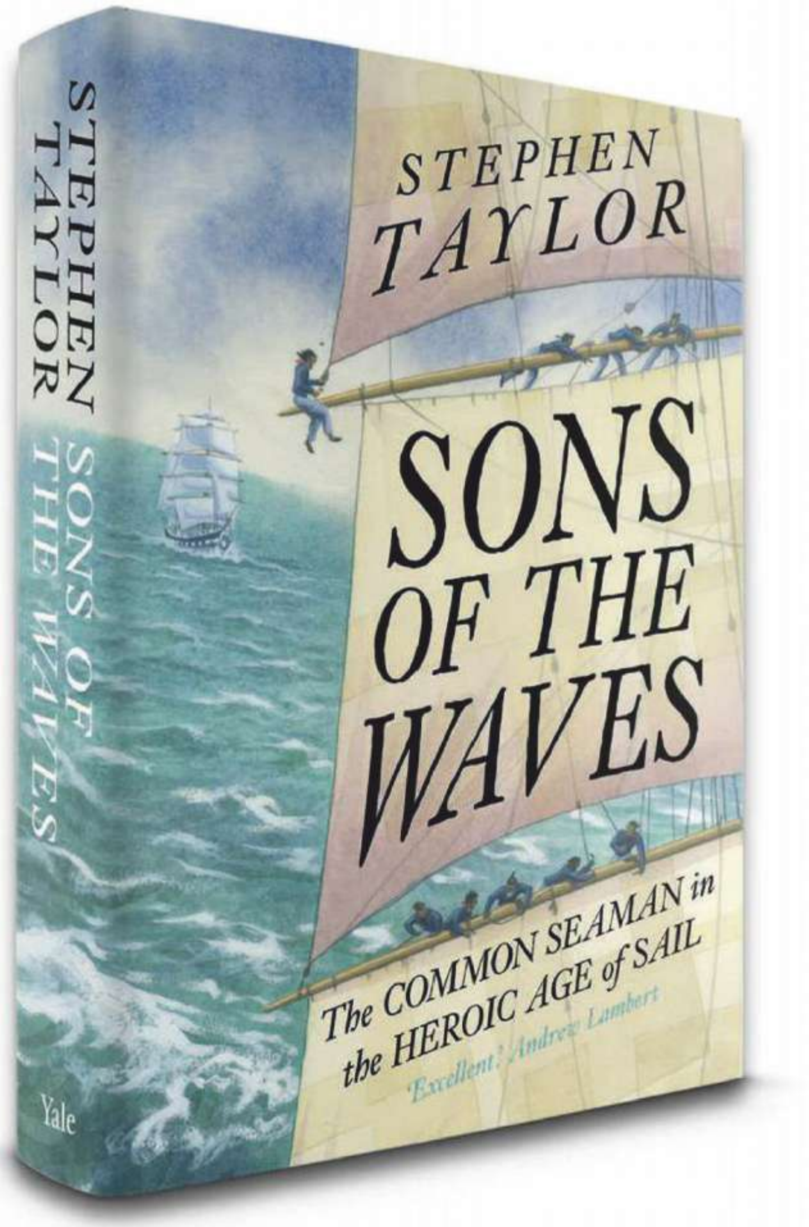
Charles Dickens
Jersey
Charles Dickens 1812-1870

Fans of classic literature will love these stunning collectables from Jersey Post, issued to mark 150 years since Charles Dickens' death. Designed to look like classic leather book jackets, the stamps feature key scenes and characters from some of Dickens' best-loved works.

www.jerseystamps.com

Email: stamps@jerseypost.com or call us on +44 (0) 1534 616717
www.facebook.com/jerseystamps @JerseyStamps

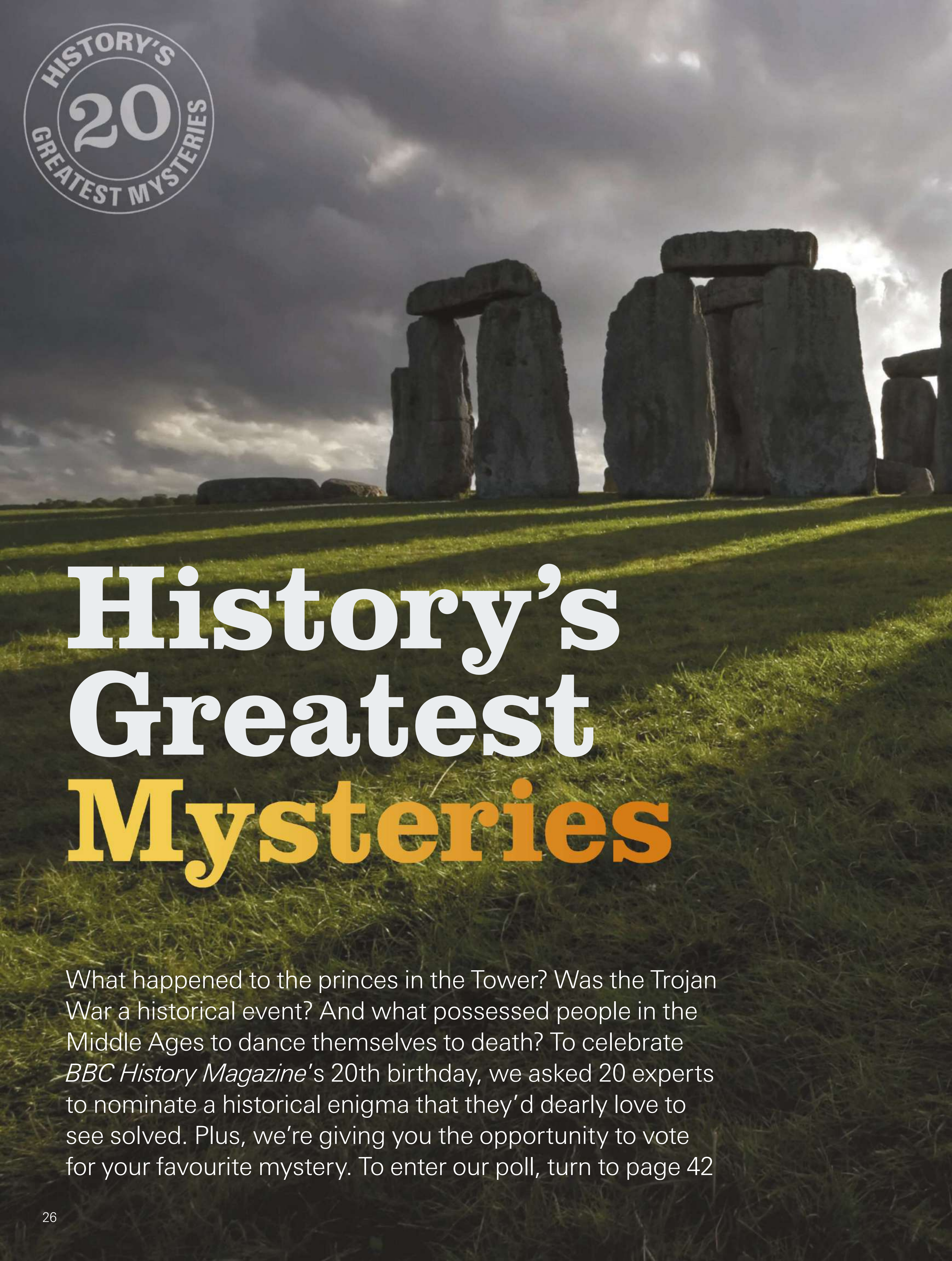
Jersey Post


STEPHEN TAYLOR
SONS OF THE WAVES
The COMMON SEAMAN in the HEROIC AGE of SAIL
'Excellent' Andrew Lambert
Yale

'The Royal Navy had some great leaders but what made their achievements possible was the thousands of unknown and unheard-from seamen who manned these vessels. This book starts the exploration of those fascinating lives.'
Sir Robin Knox-Johnston

Available now in hardback and ebook

Yale University Press | yalebooks.co.uk



HISTORY'S 20 GREATEST MYSTERIES

History's Greatest Mysteries

What happened to the princes in the Tower? Was the Trojan War a historical event? And what possessed people in the Middle Ages to dance themselves to death? To celebrate *BBC History Magazine*'s 20th birthday, we asked 20 experts to nominate a historical enigma that they'd dearly love to see solved. Plus, we're giving you the opportunity to vote for your favourite mystery. To enter our poll, turn to page 42

Quiet majesty
"The more we learn about Stonehenge, the more we realise how astonishingly technically accomplished – and downright strange – it really was," writes Mike Pitts

GETTY IMAGES

Who built Stonehenge – and why?

Chosen by **Mike Pitts**

When the crowds have gone and jackdaws strut high above on the megalithic lintels, I can bask in the quiet majesty of Stonehenge. It is 40 years since I first directed an excavation there. In that time, we have learnt more about the monument and the people who erected it than I imagined possible. But can we at last say why Stonehenge was built? I would say no. The more we learn, the greater the mystery.

We build our picture of the ancient past from things we dig up and things we imagine. The oldest stories about Stonehenge tell how a wizard flew the stones across from Ireland. You can still make out the imprint of a heel where the devil flung one of the megaliths at a friar. On another stone, water, reddened by algae, pools like sacrificed maidens' blood.

Historical inquiry, finding no record of Stonehenge's construction, sought to pin the achievement on known ancient peoples from other countries: Greeks, Romans and early medieval Danes. Such speculation was stilled in 1901, when the first scientific excavation at the site exposed nothing that wasn't already recognised as the tools and debris of prehistoric Britons. Nonetheless, the structure's extraordinary design and materials meant that the possibility of Mediterranean connections – even a Greek architect – survived into the 1960s. But by then, most archaeologists had embraced the modern view: Stonehenge was entirely the creation of indigenous Neolithic peoples.

The argument then moved from who built it to what sort of society was responsible for it. Was it the ultimate symbol of a highly ranked culture – a chiefdom, perhaps – where the big monuments were expressions of status, power and means of control? Or was it a focal point in an egalitarian world that needed places for people to come together from wide areas, to trade, socialise and engage in communal rituals and ceremonies?

If these theories about a complex monument with a suitably complex history are more helpful than the one-line ideas that are popular in the media – it was a sex symbol, a computer, an observatory or an amplifier – still none get close to truly explaining Stonehenge.

Developments in archaeology have swung the balance of inquiry heavily in favour of evidence from the times – things we dig up. With new scientific innovations, more excavations and more archaeologists asking more questions, we now have significantly more data, as well as more types of data, than I could have imagined when I stood by my trench 40 years ago. However, the result is not that we can now answer the question: why Stonehenge? It's in fact the opposite. The more we learn, the more we realise how astonishingly technically accomplished – and downright strange – Stonehenge really was.

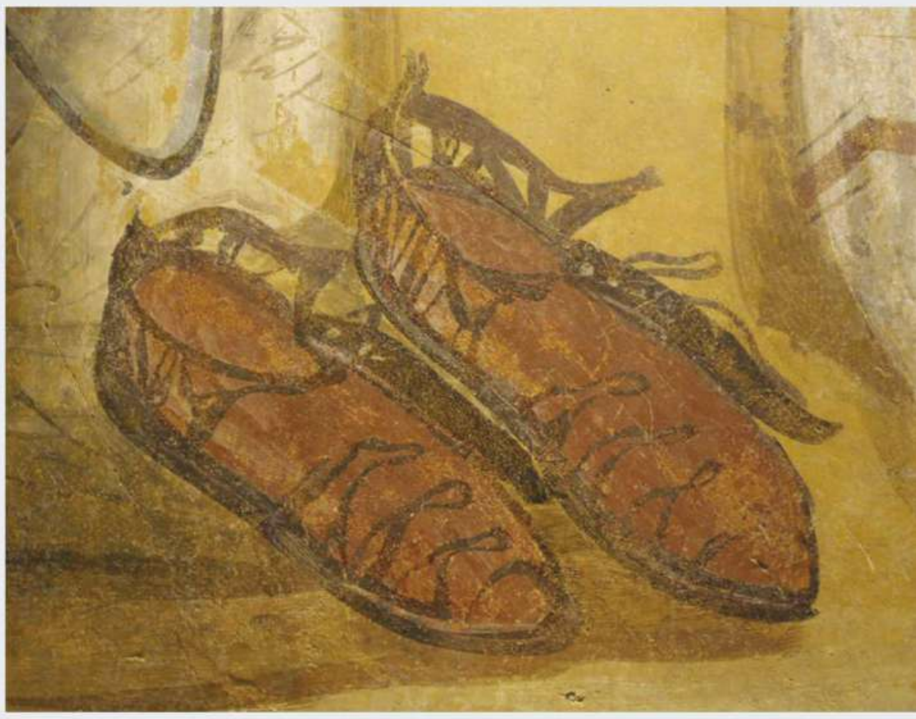
"How Grand!" wrote Sir Richard Colt Hoare, a British antiquary and archaeologist, when contemplating Stonehenge in 1810. "How Wonderful! How Incomprehensible!"

One of archaeology's great achievements of the past two centuries has been to prove Hoare right: Stonehenge truly is incomprehensible.

Mike Pitts is an archaeologist and author. His most recent book is *Digging Up Britain: Ten Discoveries, a Million Years of History* (Thames and Hudson, 2019)

Could Roman soldiers have reached China?

Chosen by **Catherine Nixey**


A mural painting showing caligae (Roman sandals), which marched one legion into big trouble in what is now Turkey, 53 BC

The sound alone would have been terrifying. A Roman legion contained around 5,000 men; 5,000 men had 10,000 feet. Each of those 10,000 feet was shod in caligae, the famous Roman hobnailed military sandals. The sound of just one of these shoes slapping against stone signalled to the empire's enemies that trouble was on its way; the cacophony made by 10,000 is all but unthinkable.

Yet it is not the sound of Roman legions that, at the distance of two millennia, is the most compelling – it is their silences. One such silence enveloped the legions of Crassus who fought against the Parthian empire at the battle of Carrhae in what is now Turkey.

Crassus should never have stepped onto the battlefield. He was wealthy, so much so that the famously affluent Croesus paled in comparison to him. But during combat, gold is no substitute for an affinity with sharpened steel. The omens for the battle had been terrible – and, it transpired, devastatingly accurate. By the end of that dark day in 53 BC, Crassus's son had been beheaded, with the decapitated head paraded on a spear before his father. Crassus, his heart broken, lost his own head a little later.

The battle would become infamous as one of Rome's worst ever military defeats. And the thousands of Roman soldiers who hadn't lost their lives were taken captive and transported east. Although the Roman poet Horace suggested the remnants of the legions had married Parthians, their true fate remained shrouded in mystery.

But in the mid-20th century, Homer Dubs, an expert in Chinese studies based at Oxford,

Where is Cleopatra's tomb?

Chosen by **Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones**

This detail from a Roman terracotta lamp may be a caricature of Cleopatra, who killed herself rather than submit to her enemy Octavian

Antony and Cleopatra's doomed love story has captivated the world for centuries. The Roman general, beset by grief and shame following his final defeat during the battle of Alexandria at the hands of his foe, Octavian, turned his sword on himself upon hearing the (false) news that Cleopatra had died.

However, his lover still lived: she had merely hidden herself in her tomb following Octavian's victory. Antony was then transported to the mausoleum, where he finally succumbed to his wounds in the embrace of his queen.

Rather than fall under Roman domination, Cleopatra, surrounded by sumptuous pearls, gold, silver and countless Egyptian treasures, killed herself on 12 August 30 BC – possibly by the bite of a cobra (or asp), a powerful emblem of pharaonic divinity. She was 39 years old. Cleopatra's corpse was mummified and, on Octavian's orders, interred beside Antony. Some 16 centuries later, Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*'s playwright, pronounced: "No grave upon the Earth shall clip in it a pair so famous."

The location of Cleopatra's tomb has remained an enigma for hundreds of years. If it was as grand as the Roman reports would have it, the tomb should have left its mark on the archaeology of Alexandria, Cleopatra's great capital city. But no trace has ever been found. Alexandria and its environs have typically attracted less attention than the more ancient sites strung along the Nile, and the city itself has become increasingly difficult to excavate: today, most of ancient Alexandria is submerged under approximately 20 feet of water.

ALAMY/THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

argued that they might have travelled further east than originally thought – potentially several thousand miles further. A few years after the battle of Carrhae, during the siege of a city in China, some mercenaries exhibited military behaviour that hadn't been seen before in the country: they interlocked their shields so closely against enemy fire that they resembled a 'fish scale'. The term is unique in Chinese literature. However, interlocking shields was one of the Roman army's signature moves, known as the testudo formation.

At around the same time in China, a city named Liqian (the ancient Chinese word for 'Rome') was founded. Was this the final destination of those Roman soldiers who had survived the battle of Carrhae? The theory is still unproven, but perhaps one day we will learn where the staccato beat of their caligae finally came to a halt.

Catherine Nixey's books include *The Darkening Age: The Christian Destruction of the Classical World* (Macmillan, 2017)

ALAMY

However, in 2006 it seemed a breakthrough had occurred. Zahi Hawass, then secretary-general of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities, announced that Cleopatra's tomb had been located at a ruined temple dedicated to Osiris (the deity of death and resurrection) near the town of Taposiris Magna, 30 miles west of Alexandria – although, confusingly, Hawass would later deny ever making the announcement. Archaeologist Kathleen Martinez received permission to dig at the ancient temple, yet after a decade of excavation and hundreds of minor finds, including pottery and even skeletal remains, the temple has not yielded a secret tomb. Martinez remains convinced, however, that Cleopatra's body is there.

If – and that's a big *if* – Cleopatra's tomb is discovered, then the archaeological world will shake. The find would even outshine that of Tutankhamun's remains. But there's a fly in the ointment. And that's that when archaeologists pin their hopes of discovery to fleeting textual references – in Cleopatra's case, those created by hostile Roman historians – the results are, inevitably, disappointing.

Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones is professor of ancient history at Cardiff University

---

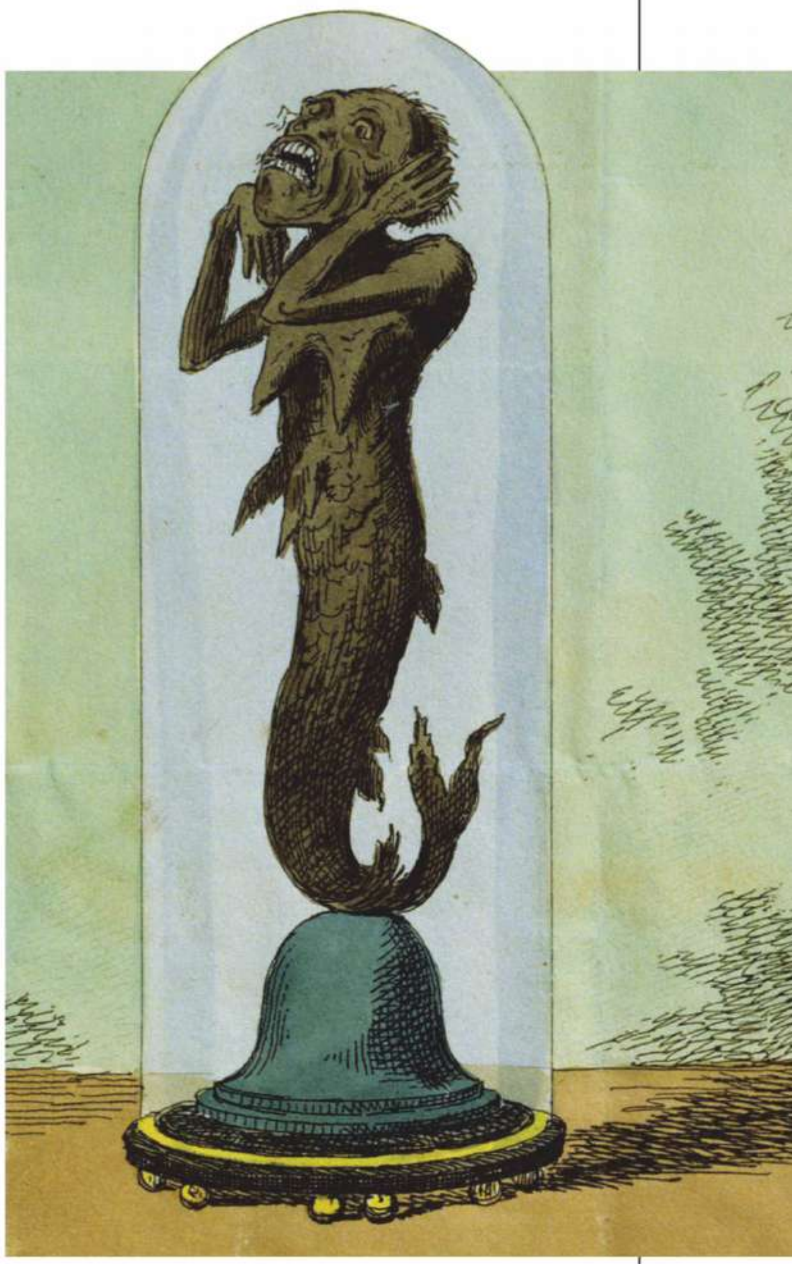
What was the Feejee Mermaid?

Chosen by **Karen Jones**

"Roll up, roll up! See the amazing Feejee mermaid!" In the early 1840s, these tantalising words rang out almost daily from PT Barnum's American Museum – home to a motley collection of exotic animals, people with unusual physical characteristics (such as the diminutive General Tom Thumb, who was just 25 inches tall) and other obscure exhibits. And the Feejee mermaid was certainly worthy of its place in this bizarre depository.

Legends of mermaids had enraptured sailors and landlubbers alike for centuries. In Greek mythology, sirens lured seafarers to their deaths, and Christopher Columbus claimed he'd witnessed mermaids swimming near Hispaniola while exploring the New World. Perhaps most famously, Hans Christian Andersen made the enigmatic creature the star of his fairy tale *The Little Mermaid*.

In the early 19th century, the legend took a sensational turn with the unveiling of a 3-foot-long mummified creature, half-humanoid and half-aquatic, reportedly captured by Japanese sailors off Fiji. It was transported to Europe by Dutch merchants, acquired in 1822 by American mariner Samuel Edes for the princely sum of $6,000, and then continued to change hands until it was leased by showman extraordinaire PT Barnum, who gave it top billing at his New York museum in 1842.



An 1822 image of the Feejee Mermaid, made famous by PT Barnum. "Many people *wanted* to believe that such creatures might be real," writes Karen Jones

With the benefit of hindsight, the fakery of the Feejee mermaid seems obvious. After all, South Pacific fishermen were known to cobble together chimeras from fish tails and ape or monkey torsos to impress visiting seafarers, not to mention moneyed European collectors who were keen to populate their 'cabinets of curiosity' with expensive trinkets, each more exotic and eclectic than the last. But at the time, many people *wanted* to believe such creatures might be real – and, even if the Feejee mermaid was a forgery, they wanted to gawk at it anyway.

In an age of global exploration, new species were being continually discovered and classified. And many of these animals appeared almost fantastical, with creatures like the platypus becoming focal points for intense debate surrounding their unusual physical characteristics. If these strange critters could be real, some reasoned, then why not mermaids?

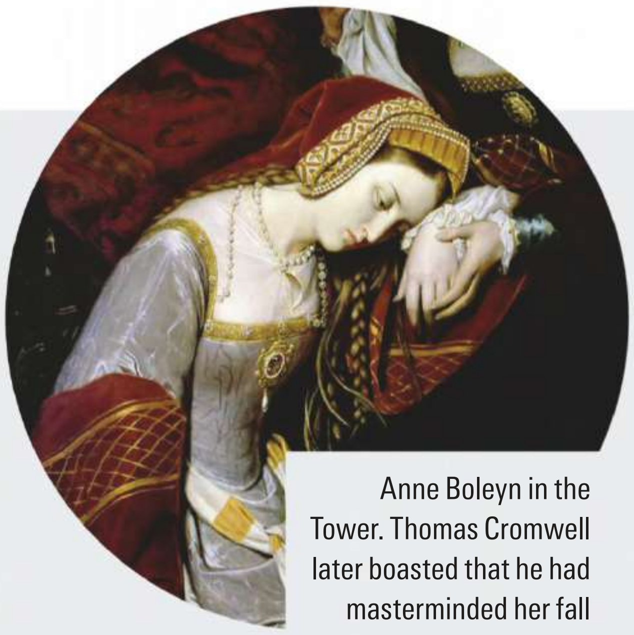
Meanwhile, in the 19th century the general public was enthralled by questions of the human-animal divide, prompted in large part by the works of Charles Darwin and others who were versed in evolutionary theory. Equally, the popularity of Barnum's museum spoke to a broader fascination with freak shows – circuses that specialised in 'deviant' bodies, from bearded ladies to fearsome wolf men – that was an entertainment staple of the 19th-century city.

There is another twist to this tale: what happened to the Feejee mermaid? After its exhibition at Barnum's museum (and a travelling tour of the southern USA), it disappeared from public view. Various incarnations appeared in sideshow museums and freak shows in later years, only to be exposed as fakes of the original fake. Perhaps this curious cryptozoological artefact is languishing in someone's attic, waiting to be discovered.

Karen Jones is professor of history at the University of Kent. Her latest book is *Calamity: The Many Lives of Calamity Jane* (Yale, 2020)

Who was the architect of Anne Boleyn's downfall?

Chosen by **Tracy Borman**


Anne Boleyn in the Tower. Thomas Cromwell later boasted that he had masterminded her fall

For Anne Boleyn, the morning of 2 May 1536 started out as any other. Watching a game of tennis at Greenwich Palace, she began considering placing a bet on one of the players – until a messenger arrived and told her that, by order of the king, she must present herself before the Privy Council at once. Even though Anne could not have guessed that she was about to face charges of adultery and – even more shockingly – incest, his words must have filled her with dread.

Anne's marriage to Henry VIII had been falling apart for months, thanks largely to her failure to give him the son he craved. Her husband could barely stand the sight of her, and eagle-eyed courtiers noticed that in private he "shrank from her". Then, in January 1536, Anne miscarried for the third time. Even though she had only been 14 weeks' pregnant, it was rumoured her attendants could tell it had been a 'male child' she carried.

For Henry, this was the last straw: he was desperate to be freed from the shackles of his marriage. But did he devise the means, or was that down to his 'fixer', Thomas Cromwell?

Cromwell had a strong motive of his own to get rid of Anne. Although they had started out as allies, by 1536 they were enemies, and Anne had made it clear "she would like to see his head off his shoulders". It was his neck or hers.

Cromwell led the investigation into Anne's private life and compiled the 'evidence' of her adultery with five men – her own brother George included – as well as a plot to murder the king. He was also instrumental in preparing for Anne's trial, which was held at the Tower on 15 May and was so heavily weighted against her that the guilty verdict was assured.

According to the imperial ambassador Eustace Chapuys, Cromwell boasted that he "had planned and brought about the whole affair". But had he been acting on Henry's orders, or did the king have something less extreme in mind – another annulment, perhaps?

There is, of course, another possibility: that Anne really was guilty of adultery, incest and treason. She was certainly a notorious flirt who loved to surround herself with adoring male courtiers. Her friendship with Henry Norris was particularly close, and she once made the fateful remark that he "looked to dead men's shoes" – in other words, he hoped the king would die so that he could wed her. But most of the counts of adultery have been convincingly disproved, and it seems unlikely that someone of Anne's political guile would risk everything for a thoughtless affair (or several of them).

What – or who – was really behind Anne's downfall has been the subject of furious debate among historians ever since. But unless fresh evidence comes to light, we will probably never know the answer. Perhaps that's why we're still so fascinated by her story, almost 500 years after her death.

Tracy Borman is a historian and broadcaster. Her books include *Henry VIII and the Men Who Made Him* (Hodder & Stoughton, 2018)

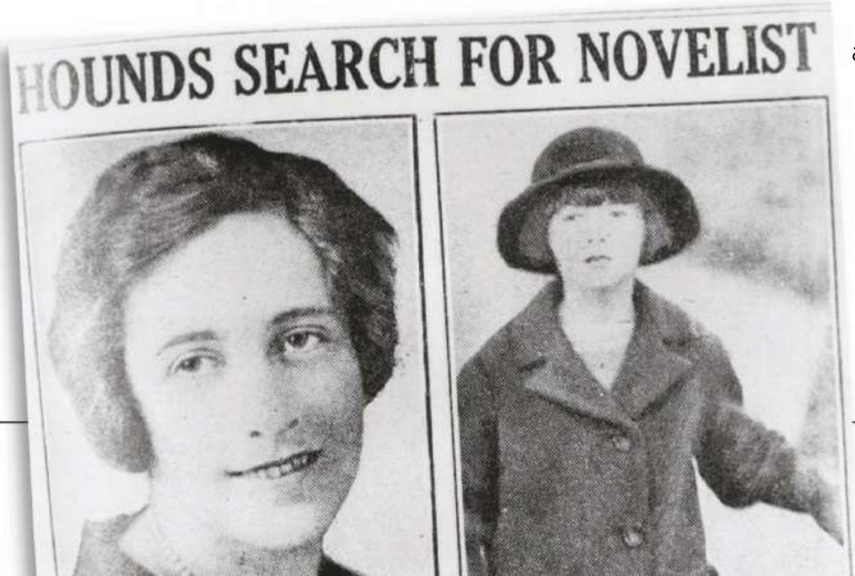
Did Agatha Christie engineer her own disappearance?

Chosen by **Dominic Sandbrook**

Never has there been a more intriguing case of life imitating art than the disappearance of Agatha Christie, the 'Queen of Crime'.

On the evening of 3 December 1926, Christie – at this point, one of Britain's most promising popular writers, with six books to her name – was at her home in Sunningdale, Berkshire. She had just emerged from a blazing row with her husband, Archie, who had recently asked her for a divorce. She went upstairs to kiss her seven-year-old daughter goodnight. Then, she got behind the wheel of her Morris Cowley, started the engine – and disappeared.

What followed was a media sensation. Amid a blizzard of headlines (like the one, right, accompanied by an image of Agatha Christie), the police mobilised a thousand officers to help with the search. Christie's rival, Dorothy L Sayers, visited her house to look for clues, and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle consulted a medium for advice from the spirit world. One *Daily Express* front page alluded to the twists of the bizarre case: "CLUES IN THE RIDDLE OF MRS CHRISTIE – Hatless Woman Met on the Downs – 5 AM INCIDENT – Helped by a Man to Start Her Car." Christie herself could not have invented a more thrilling mystery.


HOUNDS SEARCH FOR NOVELIST

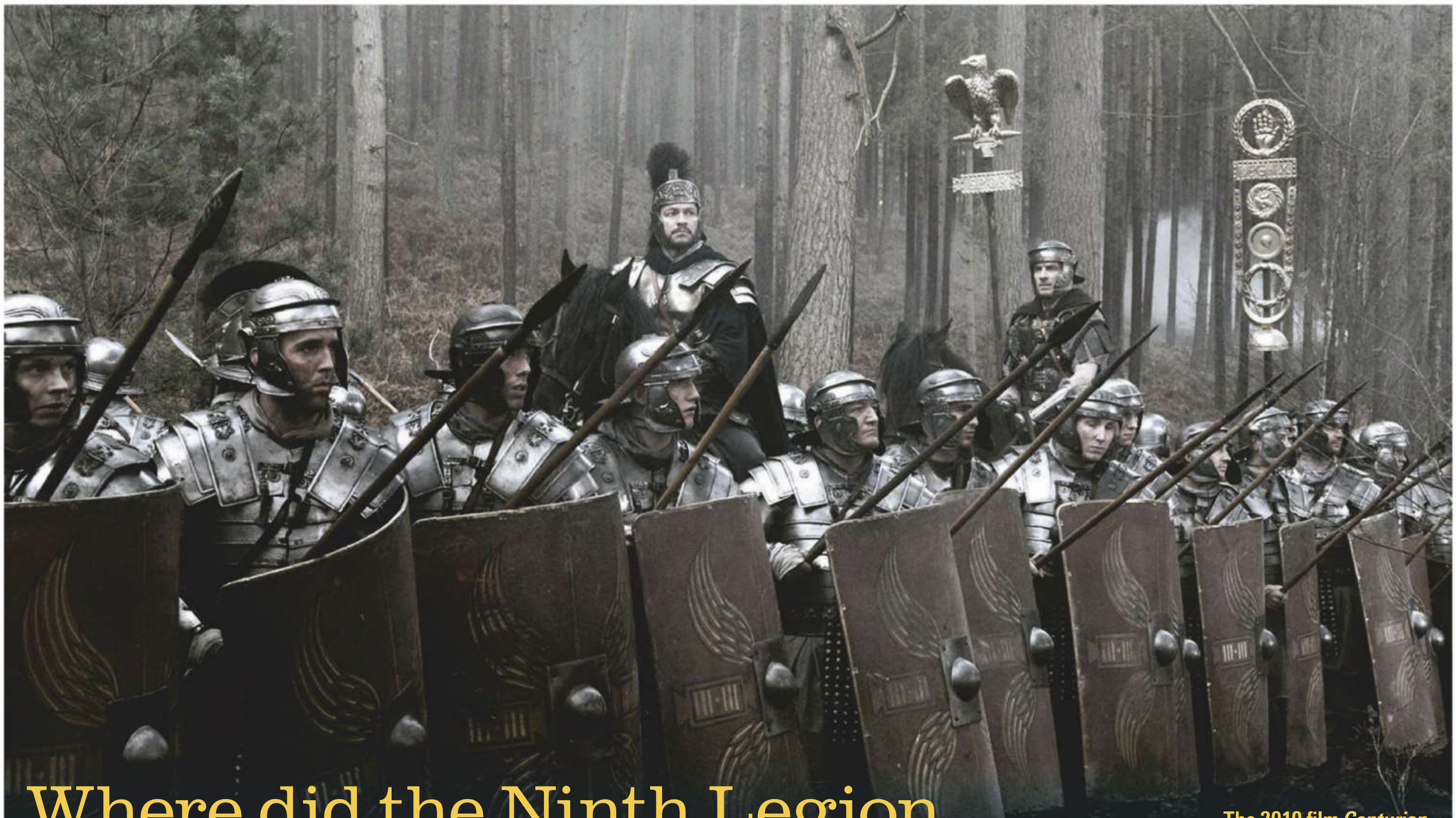
For 10 days, there was no sign of her. Then, on 14 December, Christie was found in Harrogate's genteel Swan Hydro Hotel, where she had checked in under an assumed name. The writer had participated in the hotel's bridge and dancing programmes for days, and when she was recognised at last, she claimed to have lost her memory. Perhaps the strangest thing of all, though, was her choice of false name: Neele. For, as she knew, her husband had been having an affair – and his lover's surname was Neele.

Precisely what happened will never be known. Doctors confirmed Christie's claim that she had lost her memory, but some people insisted it was a publicity stunt. And fascination with the case continues to this day. One of Christie's biographers thinks she staged the disappearance to humiliate her husband; another believes she suffered a severe nervous breakdown.

Christie never spoke of the incident again; in her autobiography, she did not afford the episode a single word. Her most enduring mystery, then, is rooted in fact rather than fiction.

Dominic Sandbrook is a historian, author and broadcaster. His most recent book is *Who Dares Wins: Britain, 1979–1982* (Allen Lane, 2019)

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES



The 2010 film *Centurion* surmised that the Ninth Legion met a grisly fate in northern Britain. Another theory contends that it was butchered on the empire's eastern frontier

ALAMY

Where did the Ninth Legion meet its doom?

Chosen by **Miles Russell**

The disappearance of the Ninth Legion, one of four elite military units occupying Britain in the aftermath of the Roman invasion of AD 43, has puzzled historians for centuries. In AD 108 they were recorded rebuilding the legionary fortress of York. However, 12 years later they vanished, with their name notably absent from all subsequent military listings. One popular theory concerning their fate – augmented by Rosemary Sutcliffe's bestselling 1954 novel *The Eagle of the Ninth*, as well as two cinematic offerings, *Centurion* (2010) and *The Eagle* (2011) – is that the 5,000 soldiers of the Ninth marched north from York to suppress a rebellion, only to be ambushed and cut to pieces in the swirling mists of Caledonia.

It is easy to understand the appeal of such a story, where disadvantaged, poorly equipped British warriors inflicted a humiliating defeat upon a well-trained, heavily-armoured professional army; a clash between an over-confident imperial power and an indigenous people who refused to accept that they were beaten, where the underdog emerged victorious.

Historians, however, have doubted the validity of this hypothesis in recent years, suggesting it is more likely the Ninth was butchered somewhere on the eastern frontier of the Roman empire, having been transferred there sometime in the early second century. Unfortunately, there is not a shred of evidence to support this. The last datable artefact that relates to the Ninth is the inscription in York on the Fortress Gate, which includes the personal titles of Emperor Trajan – titles that have been dated to AD 108. In contrast, evidence for a possible transfer to the eastern frontier comprises just a few tiles, shards of pottery and a bronze pendant, all bearing the mark of the Ninth Legion, found at Nijmegen in the Netherlands. Although these do indeed show that the legion (or at least a part of it) was deployed here, it seems they derive from the early AD 80s, when Roman soldiers were sent from Britain by the Emperor Domitian to fight the Chatti, a particularly troublesome Germanic tribe.

Given the absence of evidence elsewhere in the empire, then, is there anything in Britain that suggests Rosemary Sutcliffe was right after all, and that the Ninth Legion was indeed lost in Britain during active service?

The Roman historian Fronto, writing in the AD 160s, noted that in the reign of Emperor Hadrian (AD 117–38), large numbers of Roman soldiers were slain by the British. While the full extent of these losses remains unknown, they must have been significant for Fronto to have mentioned them. The *Augustan History*, compiled in the fourth century, observed that when Hadrian became emperor, "the Britons could not be kept under Roman control". Meanwhile, a tombstone recovered from Ferentinum, Italy states that emergency reinforcements of more than 3,000 men were rushed to the island on "the British Expedition" early in Hadrian's reign. Hadrian himself came to Britain in AD 122 to "correct many faults" and instruct the Romans to build his eponymous wall. He also brought a new legion, the Sixth, with him. The fact that they took up residence in York seems to indicate that the great loss of personnel noted by Fronto had indeed occurred within the ranks of the Ninth, who had formerly been based here.

Until more conclusive evidence is found to illuminate the final days of the Ninth, we can only speculate as to what happened to them. However, it seems likely that somewhere in northern Britain, there's a corner of a forgotten field that is for ever Rome.

Miles Russell is a senior lecturer in prehistoric and Roman archaeology at Bournemouth University

What disaster struck the Franklin Expedition?

Chosen by **Andrew Lambert**

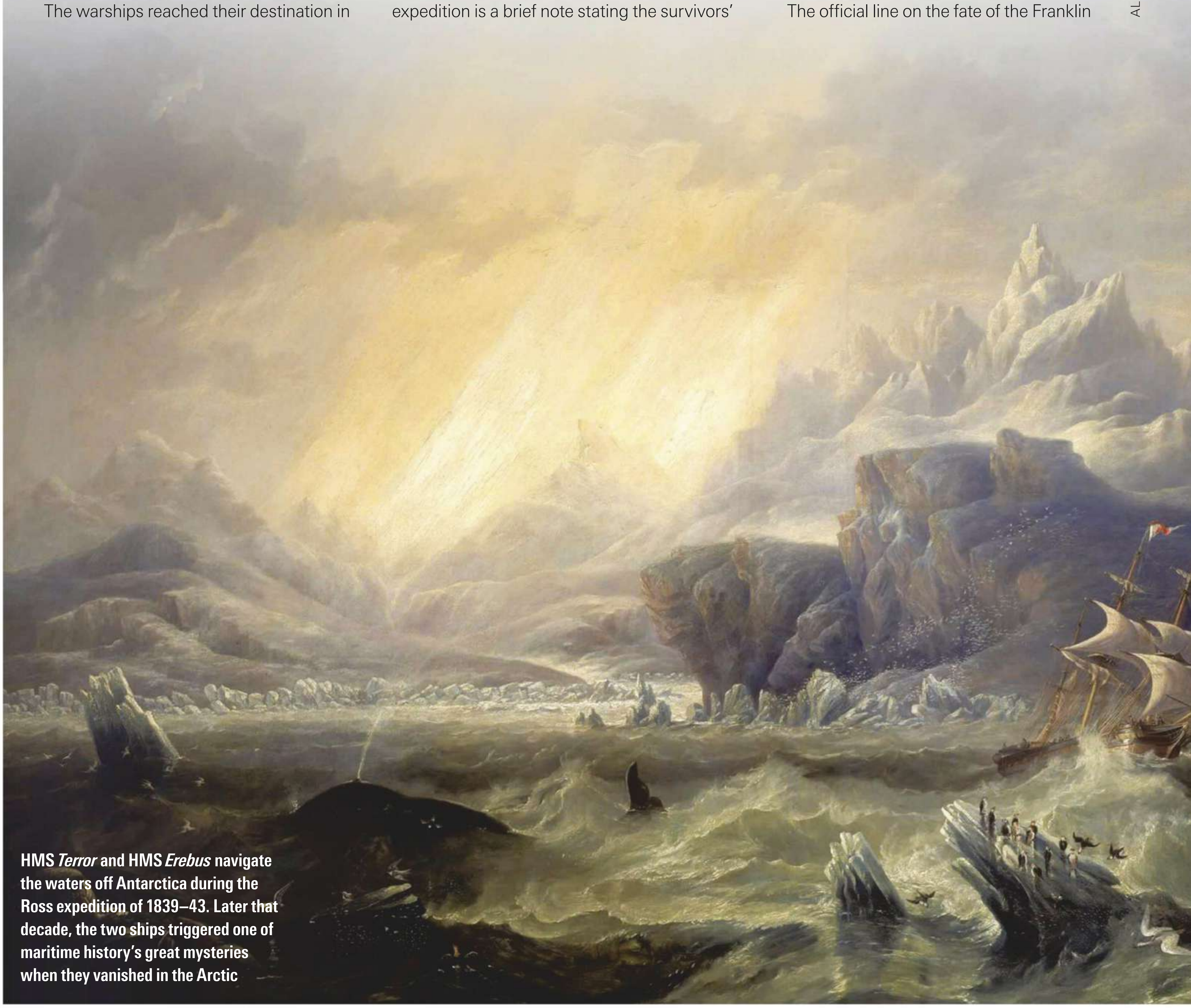
In 1845, two British warships, HMS *Erebus* and HMS *Terror*, with 129 officers and men on board, sailed under the command of Captain Sir John Franklin into the Canadian Arctic. It was generally assumed they were attempting to complete the fabled North-West Passage, connecting the Atlantic to the Pacific, but in actuality their mission was to reach the magnetic north pole and conduct an overwinter series of magnetic observations as part of a global research project.

The warships reached their destination in September 1846. However, three men had lost their lives (modern autopsies indicate tuberculosis was to blame) during the journey, and even more died during the next 18 months, including Franklin, but curiously no causes of death can be determined. In April 1848 the remaining crew abandoned their ships, which were imprisoned by thick ice off King William Island, an outcrop in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago.

The only surviving written record of the expedition is a brief note stating the survivors' intention to reach Back river – more than 1,000 miles away. However, in the face of limited food supplies, an inability to hunt what scant resources they came across during the journey, sub-zero temperatures and extremely difficult terrain, their desperate march descended into large-scale cannibalism at two separate locations (which was witnessed by Inuit hunters). The entire expedition perished less than halfway to safety.

Over the following decade, 13 search and rescue missions were dispatched from Britain and America, and in 1859 a sledge expedition finally reached Victory Point on King William Island. Here, the officers' final message was discovered, as well as a boat containing incomplete skeletons. Despite clear evidence, the crew's cannibalism was concealed, and a statue was erected in London to commemorate Franklin's 'discovery' of the North-West Passage.

The official line on the fate of the Franklin



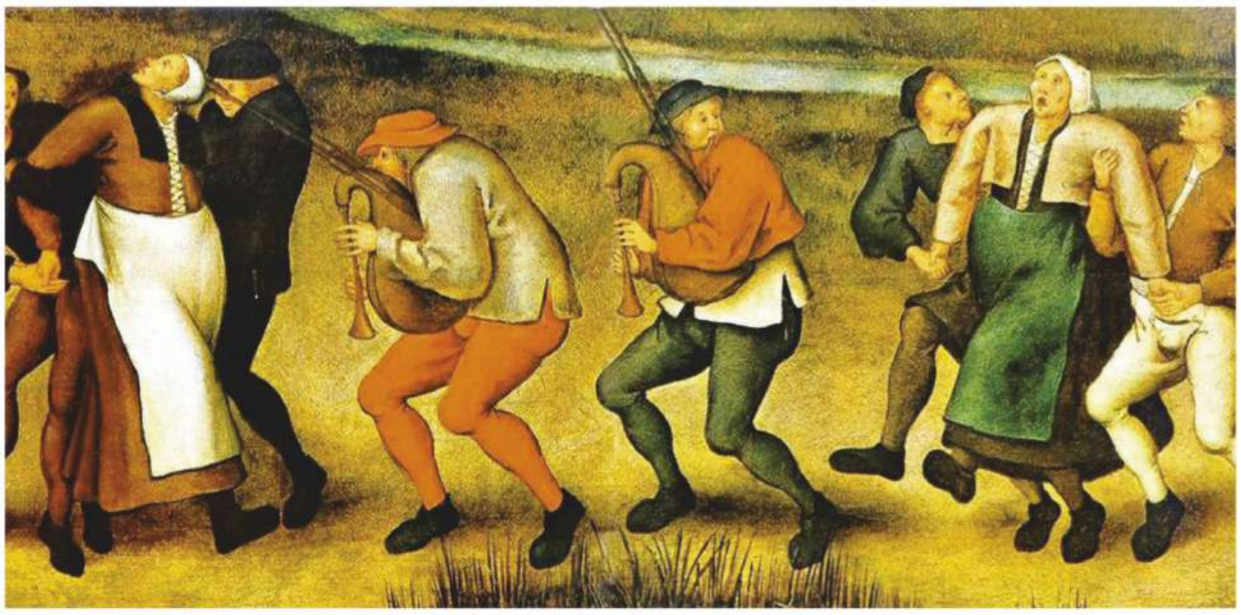
ALAMY

HMS *Terror* and HMS *Erebus* navigate the waters off Antarctica during the Ross expedition of 1839–43. Later that decade, the two ships triggered one of maritime history's great mysteries when they vanished in the Arctic expedition went largely unchallenged until just six years ago, when Canadian archaeologists located and visited the remains of both *Terror* and *Erebus*. *Terror*, they discovered, had been successfully navigated south from Victory Point, and *Erebus* probably drifted south with the melting ice and sank without a crew on board.

Despite the discoveries of the two wrecks, the reason why the ships were abandoned – and why so many men died before the survivors decided to make for Back river – remains a mystery. The expedition's paperwork, which could contain the answer to this puzzle, is unlikely to have survived 170 years below the waves. Perhaps this enigma will always go unsolved, with the crew's secrets lost to the icy water.

Andrew Lambert is professor of naval history at King's College London. His most recent book is *Seapower States* (Yale, 2018)

ALAMY



A 16th/17th-century image shows dancing mania seizing people in Molenbeek (modern-day Belgium)

Why did medieval Europeans dance themselves to death?

Chosen by **Helen Carr**

In the town of Strasbourg, 1518, a woman named Frau Troffea left her house and weaved her way down a narrow street. Then, she began to dance, not to music but to her own wild and furious tune, succumbing to a madness that quickly spread. Others heard this silent call, and soon almost 400 people were cavorting through the town, a frenzy of contorting and twisting limbs. The crowd – now a spinning mass of bodies – had been seized by an overwhelming compulsion to dance, without rest, food or water.

This was not the first time such an epidemic, known as a 'Dancing Plague', afflicted Europe. Accounts from 1374 describe a similar situation in the Rhine: "First of all they fell foaming to the ground; then they got up again and danced themselves to death."

The strange phenomenon has never been fully explained. Historically, it was attributed to demonic influence, or even heresy. Nineteenth-century historians turned to science and attempted to diagnose the dancers with Sydenham's chorea or chorea minor, a disorder characterised by rapid, uncoordinated jerking movements primarily affecting the face, hands and feet. In more recent decades, environmental catalysts have also been investigated, including the ingestion of ergot: a type of fungus containing psychotropic properties that was famously used to account for the hysterical behaviour in Salem, New England, that resulted in the mass witch trials of 1692–93.

Another explanation, first offered by psychologists and then taken up by historian John Waller, is also persuasive: the dancing plague was the result of mass psychogenic illness. This type of disorder is triggered by emotional or mental stress, and the medieval period was rife with war, plague and famine. In the 14th century, flooding in the Rhine saw water levels rise to 34 feet, submerging Strasbourg and causing devastation, which was followed by disease and starvation. And in the decade prior to the 1518 dance, Strasbourg was ravaged by plague, famine and a severe outbreak of syphilis, leaving its people in despair. Could these terrible hardships be, then, the reason why sufferers of the dancing plague seemed to dissociate from their bodies and become lost in a strange reverie, bruised, bloody and cavorting without rest, sometimes for weeks at a time?

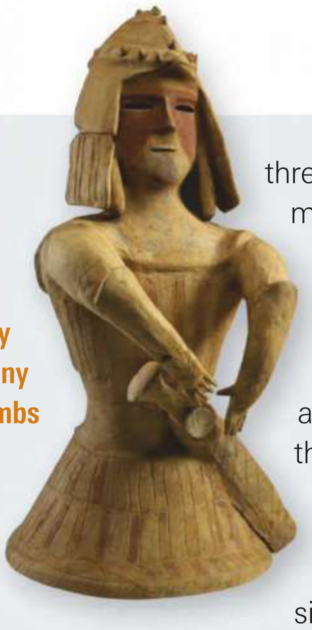
Indeed, this almighty compulsion to dance could be the result of a type of post-traumatic stress disorder. But this means of processing their dire circumstances was dangerous: many dancers died of exhaustion, dehydration or starvation. Others eventually fell out of their trance-like states and were submerged once more in reality.

However, while these curious cases may shed new light on the ambiguous history of the psychological response to extreme physical and emotional stress, we still cannot know for sure why the dancing plagues of the 14th and 16th centuries swept through parts of Europe. For now, at least, the real reason people danced through the streets of Strasbourg or spun and swayed at the banks of the Rhine remains an enigma.

Helen Carr is a medieval historian and TV producer. Her podcast, *Hidden Histories*, is available to stream at *Acast.com*

What secrets do the *kofun* tombs hold?

Chosen by **Christopher Harding**



This clay warrior adorned one of sixth-century Japan's many elaborate tombs

They are Japan's answer to Egypt's pyramids: enormous 'old tombs' (*kofun*) built by many hundreds of workers at a time to house the remains of – we think – the very greatest of kings. The first small *kofun* began appearing across Japan in c250 AD. Chambers were sunk into the ground, then built up at the sides using stone and finally enclosed over the top to create a great mound. By the fifth century, *kofun* that were hundreds of metres in width and length were being constructed.

We know quite a lot about *kofun*. The basic design came from the Korean peninsula. So this was yet another element of Japanese culture with roots in mainland Asia, along with everything from rice agriculture and bronze-working to a writing system, music, dance, Buddhism and fine clothes.

Inside each of the *kofun* that have been excavated so far, archaeologists have typically found a wooden coffin buried alongside precious objects, ranging from bronze mirrors to iron armour to finely wrought swords. Outside, on the slopes of the mounds, people sometimes placed terracotta figurines as boundary markers. Known as *haniwa*, their designs can be incredibly intricate, including dancers, female shamans, warriors, horses, boats and birds.

However, what we *don't* know about the largest and grandest of these burial mounds – the *Daisen Kofun* – is the answer to the most important question of all: who is inside? This *kofun*, located in present-day Osaka, was constructed in the fifth century. Incorporating three moats, it is nearly half a kilometre long, 300 metres wide and more than 30 metres tall; in fact, this particular *kofun* is so large that its grandeur and distinctive keyhole shape can only be fully appreciated from the air. Given all this, we can be fairly sure that no ordinary person lies beneath.

But in Japan, it's forbidden to excavate any *kofun* over a certain size and created in the shape of a keyhole, as it's believed that these are the resting places not just of great kings, but of divine emperors. To venture inside these burial chambers would be sacrilege – or would it? These spectacular *kofun* are perhaps a necessary mystery: to open them up, only to find something inside that calls into question the history of the world's oldest monarchy, is a risk that the tombs' overseers – the Imperial Household Agency – simply cannot afford to take.

Christopher Harding is a senior lecturer in Asian history at the University of Edinburgh

Why did Mao's chosen successor flee China?

Chosen by **Rana Mitter**

Lin Biao (right) with Mao in July 1971. Within weeks, the veteran army general was dead

On 13 September 1971, a Trident 1E jet fell from the skies over Mongolia, crashing into the Gobi Desert. All nine people on board were killed – including the senior Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leader and army general, Lin Biao.

The announcement of Lin's death astonished not just China, but the world. For the general had been the chosen successor to Chairman Mao, China's leader since the 1949 Communist Revolution. Lin was the head of the People's Liberation Army (PLA), and a legendary general in his own right: his tactics had contributed to communist victory during the brutal civil war of 1946–49. And the status of Lin's PLA rose even higher in the sixties and seventies, as the madness of the Cultural Revolution swept the country.

Yet at dawn on 13 September 1971, Lin and eight others – including his wife, Ye Qun, and son, Lin Liguo – rushed from their home to the waiting jet. The plane took off successfully, but in their haste to leave, they had not refuelled the plane, and the aircraft crashed.

Lin was one of Mao's most trusted colleagues; why would he flee? The official Chinese explanation was that Lin had been plotting to overthrow Mao and was attempting to leave China before his arrest. He was supposedly flying to the Soviet Union (at that time, a state hostile to China). All the Chinese records were destroyed shortly after Mao's death, so there are no documents that contradict the official version of events.

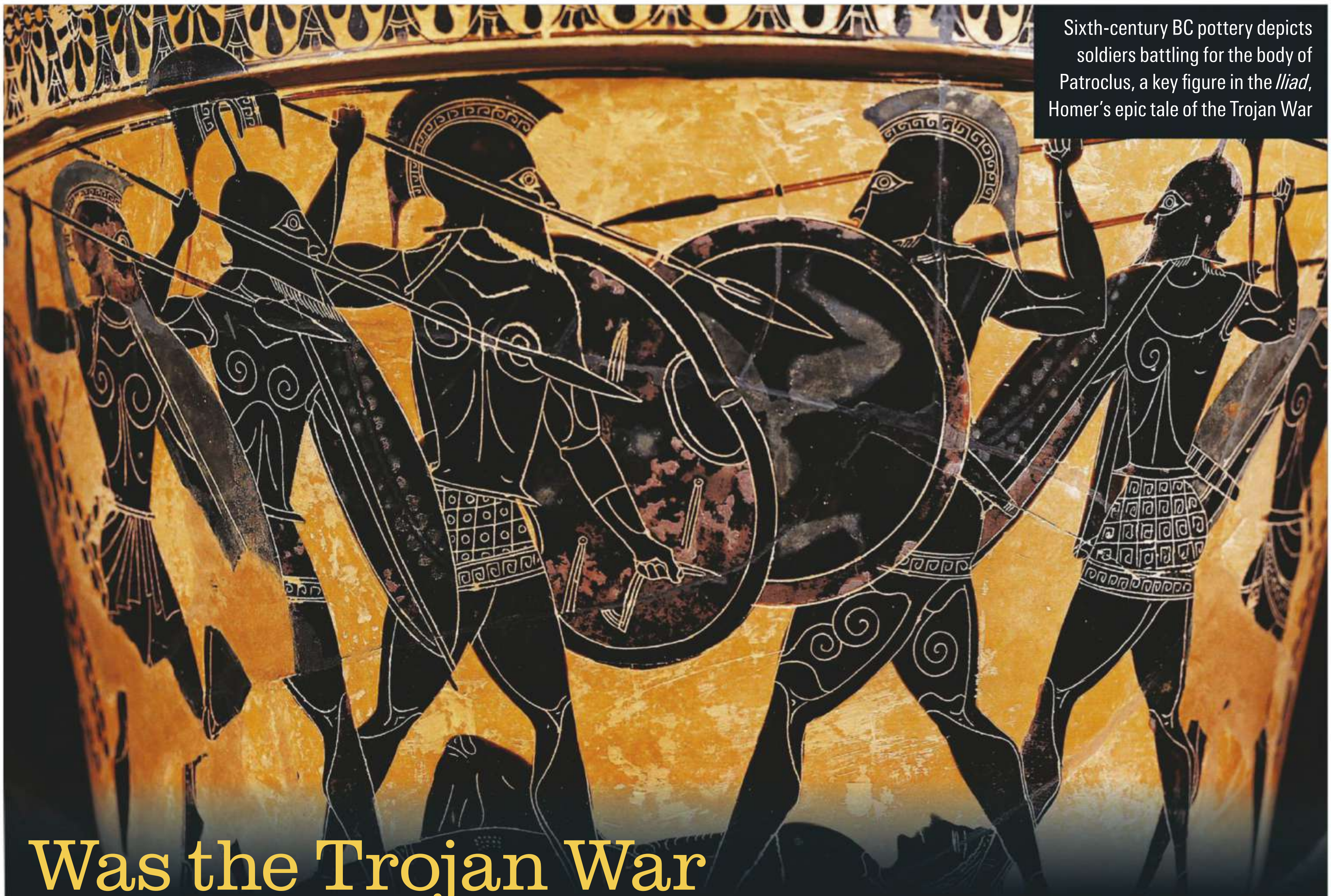
Yet there are aspects of the story that make no sense. Why would Lin Biao have wanted to lead a hasty coup? Mao was clearly ill by the early 1970s, and his colleagues must have known they would not have to wait long for a successor. An argument made in later years was that Lin, like Mao's wife, Jiang Qing, opposed warming relations with the United States, whereas China's prime minister, Zhou Enlai, was very much in favour. One theory is that the factional battles that bubbled around this dispute led Lin's family to flee before they fell victim to the intrigues of court politics. There is also evidence that Lin had grown tired of politics by 1971; instead, it was his wife and son who stood to lose their political standing.

More evidence has come to light in recent years, including a Soviet investigation into the crash site (revealed after the end of the Cold War), that muddies the waters further. For instance, the plane appeared first to have headed south, not north, from Beijing, suggesting the USSR may not have been its original destination.

Yet there is still no definitive explanation for the crash. What the 'Lin Biao incident' does show, though, is that during the Cultural Revolution, longstanding alliances within the Chinese leadership disintegrated into a snake pit of distrust. So it is perhaps no wonder that today China's communist leaders regard the period as a disaster.

Rana Mitter's next book, *China's Good War: How World War II is Shaping a New Nationalism*, is out later this year

BRIDGEMAN/GETTY IMAGES



Sixth-century BC pottery depicts soldiers battling for the body of Patroclus, a key figure in the *Iliad*, Homer's epic tale of the Trojan War

BRIDGEMAN

Was the Trojan War fact or fiction?

Chosen by **Daisy Dunn**

Surely the greatest unsolved mystery of the ancient world is whether the Trojan War actually happened. As the subject of Homer's epic poem *The Iliad*, the war – said to have been fought between the Greeks (known as the Achaeans) and the Trojans over a 10-year period – occupied an important place in the ancient imagination. But far from seeing it as merely fictional, the Greeks – among them leading historians, such as Thucydides – tended to believe that the conflict formed part of their ancient history.

The historian Herodotus described the Trojan War as breaking out almost 800 years before his own time – ergo, in the 13th century BC. However, the mathematician Eratosthenes dated it slightly later: to 1184–83 BC, to be precise. And some of the details contained in *The Iliad* are reminiscent of this general historical period. The scale and splendour of the palace of King Priam, for instance, is evocative of the opulent palaces built by the Mycenaeans in the Peloponnese – a peninsula in southern Greece. But Homer's poem is not a historical record. Completed some 400 years after the point in the late Bronze Age in which it is set, it describes a world in which gods mingled with men; the protagonists belong to a mythical age of heroes. In what sense, then, could the Trojan War that Homer described have been real?

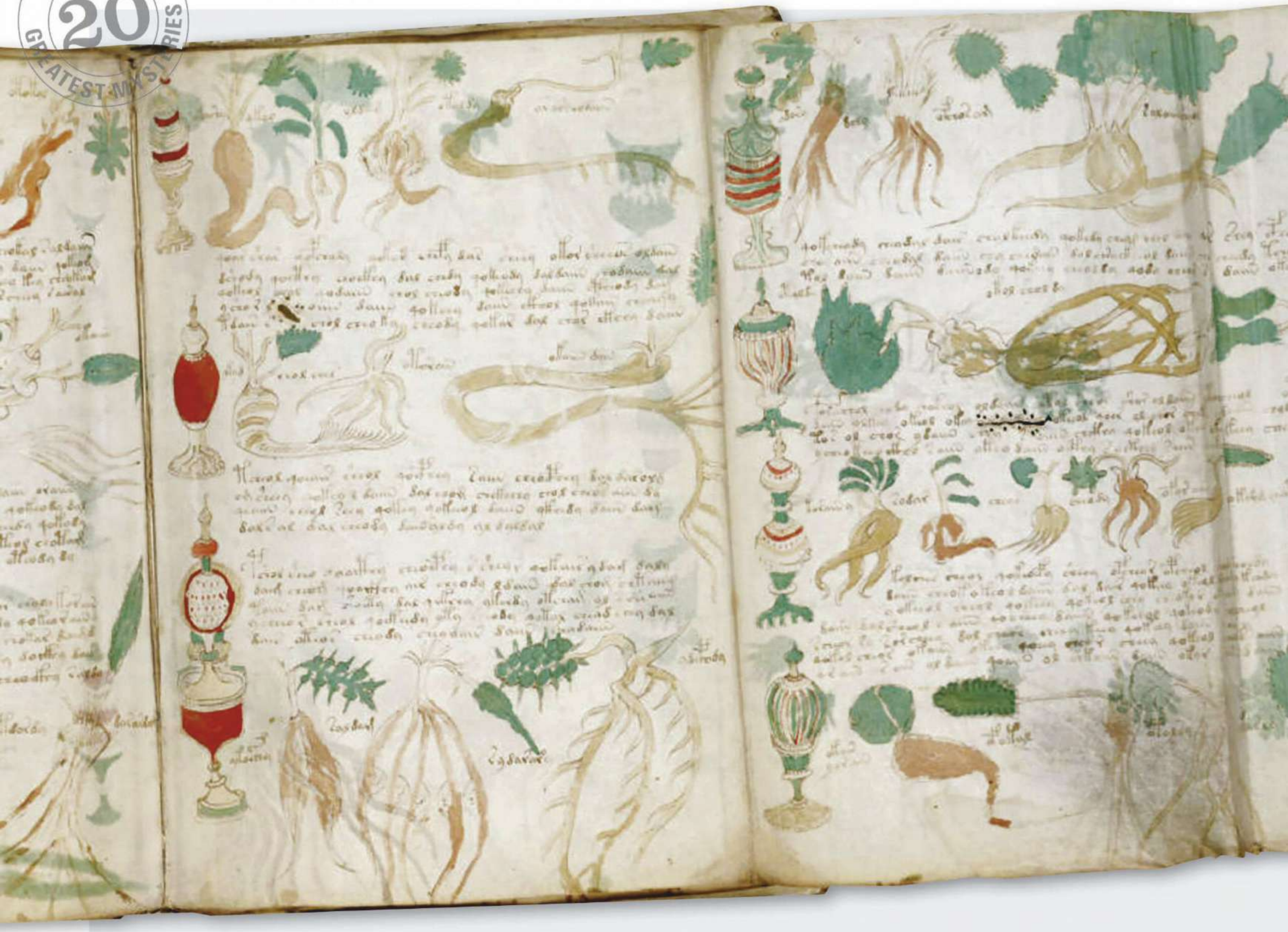
The site of historic Troy has been located at Hisarlik, near the Dardanelles, on the west coast of Turkey. Excavated by Heinrich Schliemann in the late 19th century, it was found to contain many archaeological layers. A few arrowheads and some broken human bones have been discovered in levels datable to the period of Homer's war. There were also clear signs of a devastating fire – potentially the same blaze Homer described the Greeks as kindling after they stormed the Trojan citadel.

These finds may seem meagre, but they are bolstered by evidence from elsewhere in Asia Minor. Specifically, the Hittites (an ancient Anatolian people) referred on writing tablets to conflicts concerning Troy, which they called 'Wilusa'. They even mention a ruler there named Aleksandu; in *The Iliad*, Paris, prince of Troy, is known as Alexandros.

This archaeological evidence, added to the confidence of the ancient historians, encourages us to take seriously the possibility that a war was fought at Troy in the late Bronze Age. But if there was a conflict, it must have been quite different to the one Homer described. It is difficult to imagine it lasting a decade, for example, when the site was comparatively small, and the gods could not really have meddled on the battlefield. But might Homer's poem have been created to commemorate and elevate artistically a war that ended in tragedy for the Trojans?

Ultimately, we still cannot be sure if Homer's poetry was composed to preserve distant memories of a real war, fought by men from all over the Greek world and triggered by a prince absconding with the wife of another man. The truth about the Trojan War remains, at least for now, out of our reach.

Daisy Dunn is a classicist, author and critic. Her latest book is *Homer: A Ladybird Expert Book* (Michael Joseph, 2019)



ALAMY

What is the Voynich Manuscript trying to tell us?

Chosen by **Elma Brenner**

If you were to leaf through the worn parchment of the Voynich Manuscript, you would encounter page after page of incomprehensible text. The volume, held today by Yale University, is written entirely in an unknown script that no one has yet been able to identify, accompanied by a series of vivid, beguiling illustrations. As well as being unable to decode the manuscript's contents, scholars also don't know who created it – or why they chose to make it apparently indecipherable.

The parchment that makes up the manuscript has been dated to the 15th century, and it was likely produced in central Europe in the later 15th or 16th century. As we cannot understand the text, the illustrations are the best indication of the manuscript's contents. It seemingly includes medical and scientific material, with pages dedicated to the medicinal properties of plants as well as the pharmaceutical substances that can be derived from them, a section on astrology and astronomy, and a segment that may (or may not) list recipes.

Some of the visual material, however, is very difficult to interpret. A sequence of illustrations shows nude female figures reclining in water or another fluid, surrounded by piping systems. Do these images literally display the therapeutic benefits of bathing, or are they allegorical?

In light of the illustrations, it's possible that the text itself could be related to harnessing the powers of nature and the cosmos, potentially through magical and alchemical processes – these ideas had gained great traction in Europe at this time, but experiments relating to them were typically carried out in a clandestine manner. The manuscript's compiler would have likely wanted to keep this knowledge secret, both to prevent others from appropriating it and because the church and secular authorities frowned on alchemy and magic.

The manuscript was housed at the court of a figure fascinated by alchemy and magic, the Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf II (1552–1612). Rudolf may well have acquired it from the English astrologer John Dee (1527–1608), who shared his occult interests.

While historians have uncovered many of the intricacies of people's furtive fascination with magic during the 15th and 16th centuries, the contents of the Voynich Manuscript still remain an enigma. It's most likely that the text

The Voynich Manuscript is written in a unique alphabet that has thus far defeated some of the world's greatest codebreakers

is written in cipher, where words in an as-yet unidentified language have been reconfigured into a unique alphabet, with added complexities thrown in to make the riddle even harder to unravel.

Over the years, many researchers have attempted to unpick the cipher; the work of the American husband-and-wife cryptanalyst team William and Elizebeth Friedman is particularly notable. Alongside their vital codebreaking work during the Second World War, the Friedmans also applied their expertise to the Voynich Manuscript, continuing to study it in the 1950s. Yet not even their brilliant minds were able to crack the code. Hopefully, one day a scholar poring over the manuscript will make a breakthrough, and its secrets will finally come to light.

Elma Brenner is the medieval specialist at Wellcome Collection

BRIDGEMAN

What befell Abu Bakr and his fleet?

Chosen by **Gus Casely-Hayford**

In the late Middle Ages, Mali developed into the most formidable sub-Saharan African empire the continent had ever seen. It was wealthier than any other African state and, with trading and cultural links that connected it to many of the major centres of the medieval world, it was truly formidable.

The empire reached its height in the 14th century. It was during that century that Abu Bakr Keita, the last emperor hailing from the founding dynasty, ascended the Malian throne. Yet the newly appointed emperor faced an unprecedented challenge: he was as ambitious as his forefathers, but his kingdom was bound by the unforgiving Sahara desert on one side and the Atlantic Ocean on the other, leaving him scant opportunities for expansion.

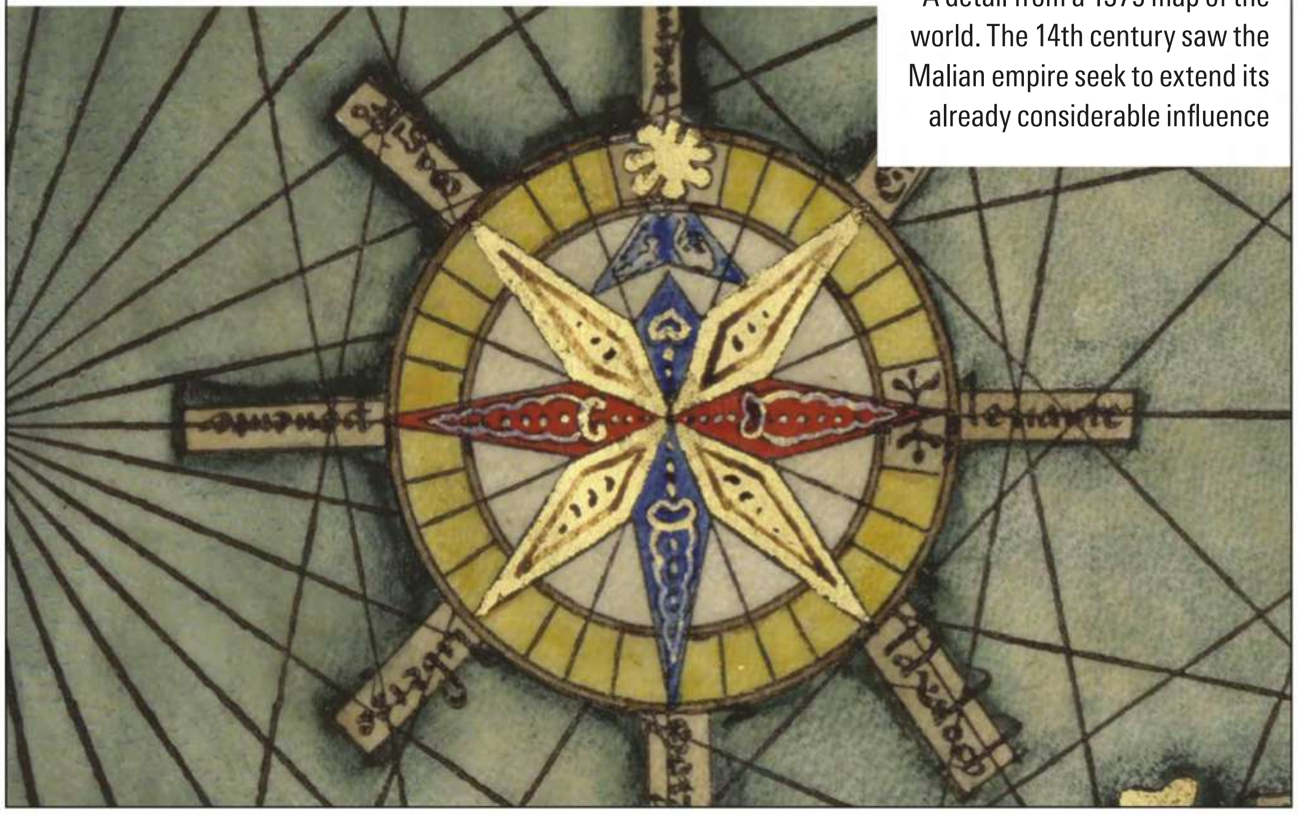
Mansa Musa, who served as Abu Bakr's councillor and heir apparent, noted that the emperor's desire to expand his kingdom at close quarters grew over time, until it bubbled over into obsession. Early in his reign, Abu Bakr sponsored an audacious attempt to sail across the Atlantic Ocean by funding the construction of a grand armada, containing hundreds of ships. Once the fleet was complete, he bade farewell to his admirals, telling his captains not to grace Mali's shores again until they had successfully sailed to the far reaches of the Atlantic.

When only a single vessel limped home, though, he lamented his actions. But Abu Bakr was undeterred. Leaving his trusted lieutenant, Mansa Musa, to administer his empire, in 1312 he tried again. This time, he personally led the expedition, travelling in an even larger armada of thousands of fully laden ships. But neither the emperor nor his vessels were ever seen again. Many still believe that he successfully crossed the Atlantic to found a new Malian state – but sadly, beyond a bevy of beautiful songs that recall the voyage, there is no concrete proof of this.

While we may not know definitively what happened to Abu Bakr's fleet, the legacy of his unbridled ambition fundamentally changed the nature of the Malian imperial project. Mansa Musa, who succeeded him, did not totally share Abu Bakr's fixation with growing the empire via acquiring new land, building an unrivalled army and strengthening trading partnerships. Instead, he also devoted his time and energy to overcoming a different kind of boundary.

In the Malian city of Timbuktu, Mansa Musa championed a project that was infused with the enterprising spirit of his predecessor: he decided to build the greatest centre of intellectual enquiry that the world had ever seen. Both men, then, had attempted to alter Mali's sense of self – yet the answer to whether Abu Bakr was successful lies, no doubt, with his lost fleet.

Gus Casely-Hayford is a cultural historian and broadcaster. He is the director of V&A East, set to open in 2023



A detail from a 1375 map of the world. The 14th century saw the Malian empire seek to extend its already considerable influence

A replica of Jesus's tomb, which, writes Tom Holland, sits at the centre of "the most contested and historically influential mystery of recorded history"

What happened to Jesus's body?

Chosen by **Tom Holland**

Bitter arguments have raged for 2,000 years over what is perhaps the most contested and historically influential mystery of recorded history: the fate of the body of Jesus Christ. To this day, the world can be divided into those who believe the corpse of an executed man accused of treason vanished from its tomb in Judea because that convicted criminal had in fact been the Son of God, and those who do not.

From the inception of Christianity, its followers understood that Christ's resurrection was a central tenet of their faith. Paul wrote to a community of Christians in Corinth two decades after the likeliest date of Christ's crucifixion: "And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain, and your faith is in vain."

To bolster their evidence that Christ had in fact risen from the dead, they cited eyewitness accounts that he had left his tomb. In his letter to the Corinthians, Paul, the earliest Christian source, explicitly referenced two men whom he knew personally as people who had witnessed the risen Christ: James, Christ's brother, and Peter, Christ's leading disciple. To the degree that the available sources enable us to judge the matter, Christians seem always to have believed in the literal truth of the resurrection.

But what are historians to make of this? There have been – and continue to be – many who are certain, just like Paul, that Jesus did indeed rise from the dead. Yet to invoke the supernatural as an explanation for a mysterious episode in the past is not something that historians have been licensed to do for many centuries now. "The theologian," historian Edward Gibbon wrote in the 18th century, "may indulge the pleasing task of describing religion as she descended from heaven, arrayed in her native purity. A more melancholy duty is imposed on the historian."

What of the theory that Jesus's body was stolen from his tomb by his disciples? This, after all, is at least as old as Matthew's gospel. Other people accused of having removed the corpse include Christ's own family, the Sanhedrin (the assembly of Jewish elders), and – according to the early Christian theologian Tertullian – a gardener worried "that his lettuces would be trampled down by crowds of visitors".

Then there is the argument that Jesus was never actually crucified. A gospel, written by a Gnostic Christian called Basilides and subsequently reworked in the Qur'an, proposed that Christ had swapped places with Simon of Cyrene. Simon had apparently offered Christ, who was carrying the cross he was to be executed on through Jerusalem, his assistance, and Simon was eventually nailed to it in Christ's place. In a further refinement of this story, an Islamic sect called the Ahmadis claim Jesus then travelled to what is now the Indian state of Kashmir, where he lived to the ripe age of 120 and, upon his death, was buried in a tomb that can be seen to this day.

More outlandish theories have been proposed, too, including the idea that Christ never existed at all, and the saga of his resurrection was instead a reimagining of the myth of Adonis (who was also apparently resurrected). Another theory (as provocatively proposed by the Dead Seas Scrolls scholar John Marco Allegro) has it that the story was prompted by the ingestion of hallucinogenic mushrooms.

In short – to paraphrase John's Gospel – there are many theories, but were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

Tom Holland is a historian, author and broadcaster. His most recent book is *Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind* (Little, Brown, 2019)

ALAMY

Where did Amelia Earhart spend her tragic last moments?

Chosen by **Clare Mulley**

"Was Amelia Earhart eaten by crabs?" one American magazine considered last year, in reference to coconut crabs' habit of consuming carrion, before deciding it was "hard to say, really". For most dead 20th-century celebrities, the first thing that usually comes up in research are dates of birth and death. But pioneering American aviator Amelia Earhart has to make do with just the former, 24 July 1897, and a rather romantic 'date of disappearance' of 2 July 1937. Whether she actually died that day remains a mystery – involving, among other factors, four border collies, 13 bones and an unknown number of crabs.

Earhart and her navigator, Fred Noonan, were heading to Howland Island in the Pacific Ocean on the final leg of their attempt to circumnavigate the globe when they disappeared. She was already famous as the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic. "Flying may not be all plain sailing," she wrote in her memoir, "but the fun of it is worth the price."

She had ordered a customised Lockheed Model 10-E Electra, complete with extra fuel tanks, autopilot and other specifications, for her circumnavigation attempt. Before being delivered, the Electra briefly featured in a 1936 romcom. "I wonder what all those gadgets are for," Clark Gable quipped in the cockpit. Yet when Noonan inspected the aircraft, he was disappointed at just how few navigation aids there were.

Earhart and Noonan set off the next June, covering three-quarters of their route before the month was out. They only had to cross the Pacific before Earhart could celebrate her 40th birthday as the unchallenged 'queen of the skies'. In their last confirmed radio transmission on 2 July, Earhart gave coordinates indicating that they had missed Howland before saying: "Wait". The transmission then stopped.

The US navy searched the area for two weeks, but no trace of the Electra was found. Officially, pilot and navigator had died after their aircraft crashed into the ocean. But many have offered alternative theories to explain the mystery.

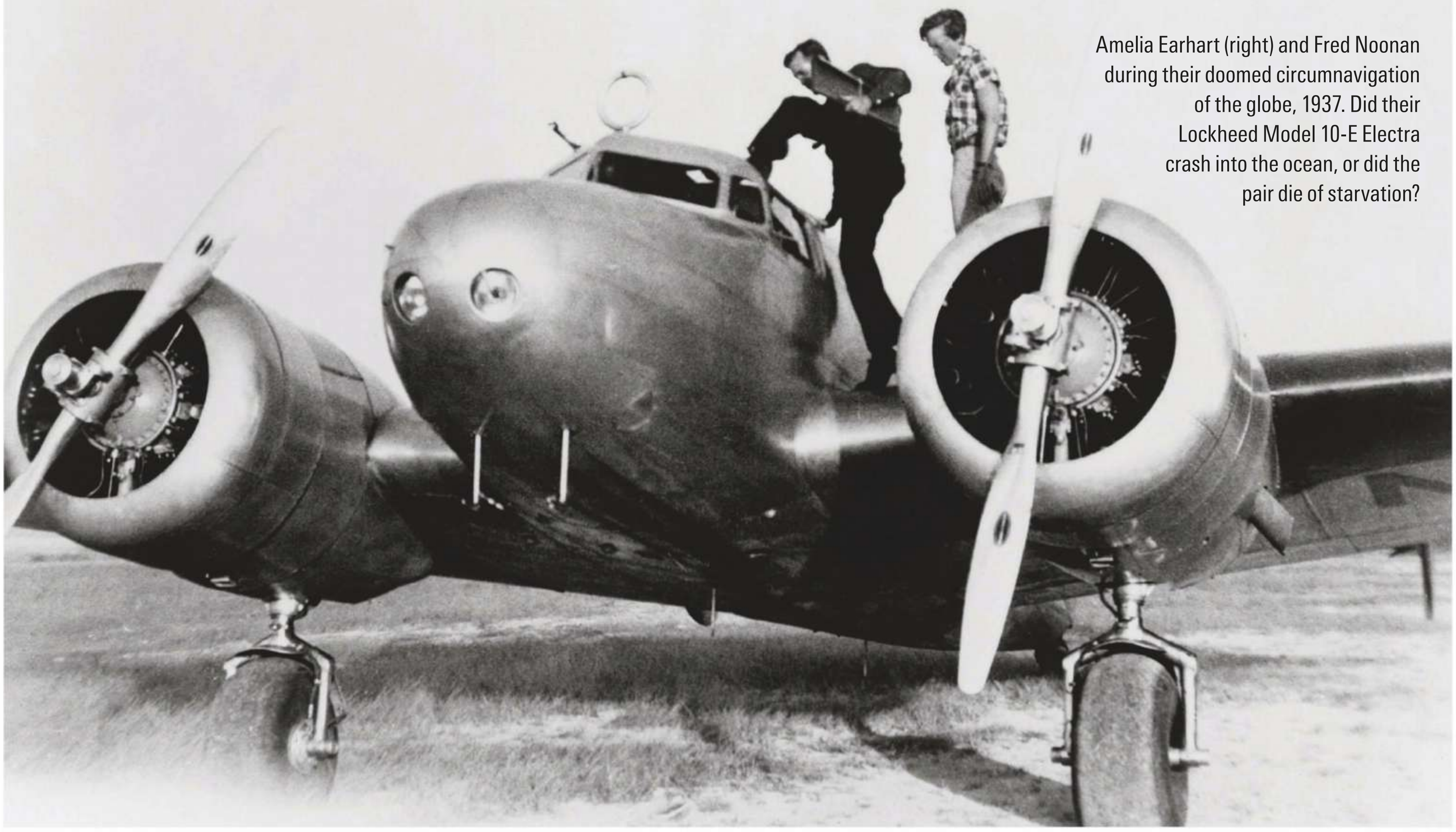
In 1940, 13 human bones, including a skull, were found on Nikumaroro, a coral reef 400 miles from Howland Island. Yet the tragic image of Earhart surviving a forced-landing on the reef, only to die of starvation and exposure, appeared to be false; the bones were identified as belonging to a "muscular European" male whose 5ft 5½in frame was smaller than both Earhart's and Noonan's.

In 1991, aircraft fuselage was found on Nikumaroro. Although experts are divided over whether the aluminium dates from 1937 or the Second World War, the discovery was enough to reignite interest.

The International Group for Historic Aircraft Recovery has since reported that 57 authentic radio transmissions on Earhart's frequencies were received across North America between 2 and 6 July 1937 – including one, heard by a Texan housewife, of Earhart reporting injuries. In 2017, four border collies apparently detected the scent of human remains beneath a tree on Nikumaroro, but no bones were recovered. Most recently, Robert Ballard, the oceanographer who uncovered the *Titanic*, searched the seas around the reef for evidence of Earhart's Electra – but found nothing.

So, was Amelia Earhart eaten by crabs? This seems possible, although whether it was on the sands of Nikumaroro or somewhere beneath the ocean is harder to say. Yet perhaps we should pay more attention to why we are collectively so enamoured with Earhart's tragic last moments, rather than the incredible achievements of her life.

Clare Mulley is an author and broadcaster. Her books include *The Women Who Flew for Hitler* (St Martin's Press, 2017)



Amelia Earhart (right) and Fred Noonan during their doomed circumnavigation of the globe, 1937. Did their Lockheed Model 10-E Electra crash into the ocean, or did the pair die of starvation?

ALAMY

Where is King Harold buried?

Chosen by **Marc Morris**

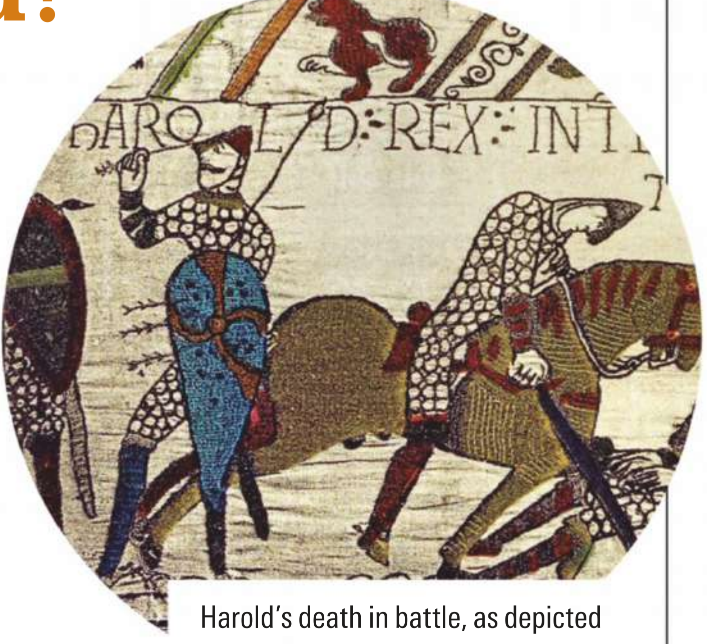
As every schoolchild knows, the fate of Anglo-Saxon England was decided by the death of Harold Godwinson. Whether or not the king was struck in the eye by an arrow, as the Bayeux Tapestry might seem to suggest, his demise on 14 October 1066 meant that the battle of Hastings was won by his opponent, Duke William of Normandy, later to be remembered as William the Conqueror.

But what happened to Harold's body once the battle was over? One suggestion that gathered adherents in recent years is that he was buried at Bosham in Sussex, an important manor that belonged to his family. This idea was inspired by the discovery in 1954 of a grave within the church containing the remains of a well-dressed Anglo-Saxon man. To suppose that it is Harold, however, requires a massive leap of faith, for no written source suggests that the king was interred there. The bones at Bosham could belong to anyone.

Turning to the written sources, perhaps the most famous suggestion is that Harold was buried at Waltham Abbey in Essex. The abbey had been refounded by the king as a house of secular canons, and, according to its own chronicle, some of these men travelled to Sussex after the battle to claim his body. They were aided by his former partner, Edith Swan-Neck, "who knew the secret marks on the king's body better than others did".

Here too, however, there are grounds for scepticism. The Waltham Chronicle was not written until the late 12th century, more than a century after the events it purports to describe. By the 13th century another chronicler there composed a fresh account claiming that Harold survived the battle and lived for many years as a hermit in Chester.

That leaves us with the two contemporary accounts of the battle, the *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio* and the *Gesta Guillelmi* by William of Poitiers. The *Carmen* states that Harold was buried on top of a cliff on the Sussex coast, under a mocking inscription that said he could continue to guard the shore. William of Poitiers says the same, and this is significant, for on other occasions he substituted the *Carmen*'s account with his own version of events. Poitiers' implicit endorsement is important because he was William the Conqueror's chief propagandist. Had William allowed Harold's body to be taken to Waltham for burial, it seems fairly certain that Poitiers would have told us so.

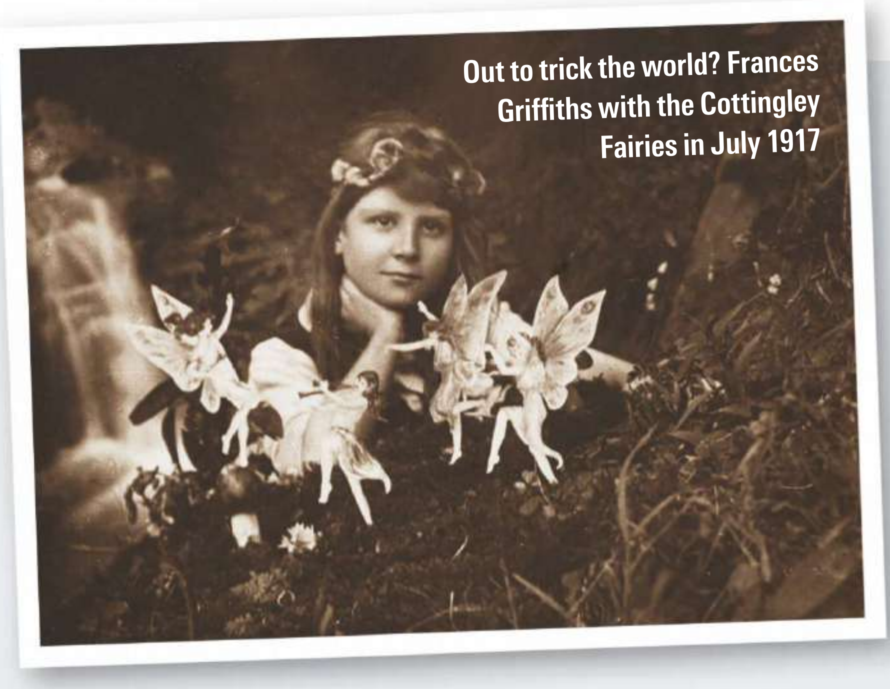


Harold's death in battle, as depicted in the Bayeux Tapestry. But what happened to his corpse next?

Marc Morris is a historian and author who specialises in the Middle Ages

Why was the world fooled by the Cottingley Fairies?

Chosen by **Richard Sugg**



Out to trick the world? Frances Griffiths with the Cottingley Fairies in July 1917

One hundred years ago this August, two cousins, 12-year-old Frances Griffiths and 19-year-old Elsie Wright, used a borrowed quarter-plate camera to take three fairy photographs near their home in Cottingley, West Yorkshire. What's more, the cousins had acted with the express encouragement of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of the famously hard-headed detective Sherlock Holmes.

Purely by chance, the two initial fairy photographs the girls had produced in 1917 had come to the author's attention through Edward Gardner, a prominent member of the Theosophical Society. In 1920, Gardner travelled up to Yorkshire in the hope of prompting more fairy photographs. By November 1920, the Yorkshire fairies had travelled to London, and invaded the entire city, staring out at bemused readers from the pages of the *Strand* magazine.

Even now, these images remain some of the most potent and familiar fairy icons of all time, rivalling Victorian artistic imaginings, as well as the works of Walt Disney. Yet once we take a hatpin and dissect these gauzy creatures, they fracture into a peculiar mosaic of questions, contradictions and uncertainty. Just how did the inventor of the world's most famous investigator fall for the tricks of two young Yorkshire girls? To put it another way: just why did Doyle, Gardner and so many others want to believe in fairies in 1920?

And what of the cousins themselves? As the historian Simon Young put it: "In 1917 Frances and Elsie were out to trick their family, in 1920 the world." What motivated the cousins to do so? And who was the ringleader in this second, celebrity phase of the Cottingley Affair?

Doyle would go to his grave in 1930 still believing the pictures to be genuine. For decades just two women knew the truth. When their confessions of fraud hit the press in March 1983, "the reputations of the world's most famous fairies and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle" lay (wrote *The Times*) "in tatters". But might one of the cousins have been forced to confess? And what was it that kept them silent so long?

Perhaps the strangest question of all is this. Were there really fairies at the bottom of the garden in Cottingley? For Frances always insisted that the fifth picture was genuine, and that she had actually seen a fairy man staring at her from a willow branch.

Richard Sugg is a historian and author. His books include *Fairies: A Dangerous History* (Reaktion Books, 2018)

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

Did Richard III order the murder of the princes in the Tower?

Chosen by **Nathen Amin**

The fate of Edward V and his younger brother, Richard, Duke of York, respectively 12 and 9 when they vanished, has elicited intense debate for centuries. Was their disappearance, as some have claimed, a Tudor stitch-up to smear King Richard III, one of British history's infamous villains? Or was something more sinister afoot?

On 9 April 1483, only a few months before the boys disappeared, Edward IV died, leaving behind a court that was crippled by divisions. As his heir was still a child, opposing factions swiftly mobilised in a bid to seize governance of the kingdom. In one corner were Edward V's maternal relations, the Woodvilles; in the other stood his paternal uncle, Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Their ambitions were incompatible.

While travelling to London to prepare for his coronation, Edward V's convoy was intercepted by Gloucester at Stony Stratford, and three of the boy's companions – including his uncle, Anthony Woodville – were arrested without warning. When news reached Edward's mother, Elizabeth Woodville, she fled with her youngest son, Richard of York, and his five sisters to sanctuary at Westminster Abbey. Meanwhile, Gloucester continued on to the capital, where he was formally named Protector on 10 May. He then placed Edward V in the Tower, ostensibly to await his crowning. Aside from the Woodvilles' expulsion from power, little appeared untoward.

However, matters took a dramatic twist during a council meeting on 13 June. On Gloucester's orders, Edward IV's close friend William Hastings was seized, dragged outside, and beheaded amid accusations of treason against the Protector. Two days later, Gloucester and Buckingham surrounded Westminster Abbey with soldiers and compelled Elizabeth to turn over her youngest son, York, who then joined his brother in the Tower. The next week, both boys were suddenly declared illegitimate on the grounds their father had supposedly married prior to his Woodville wedding – making Gloucester the legitimate Yorkist heir. The duke, for his part, did not protest, and four days later he assumed the throne as King Richard III – although many differ over whether he ascended as the reluctant benefactor of Edward IV's personal shortcomings, or the orchestrator of a coup.

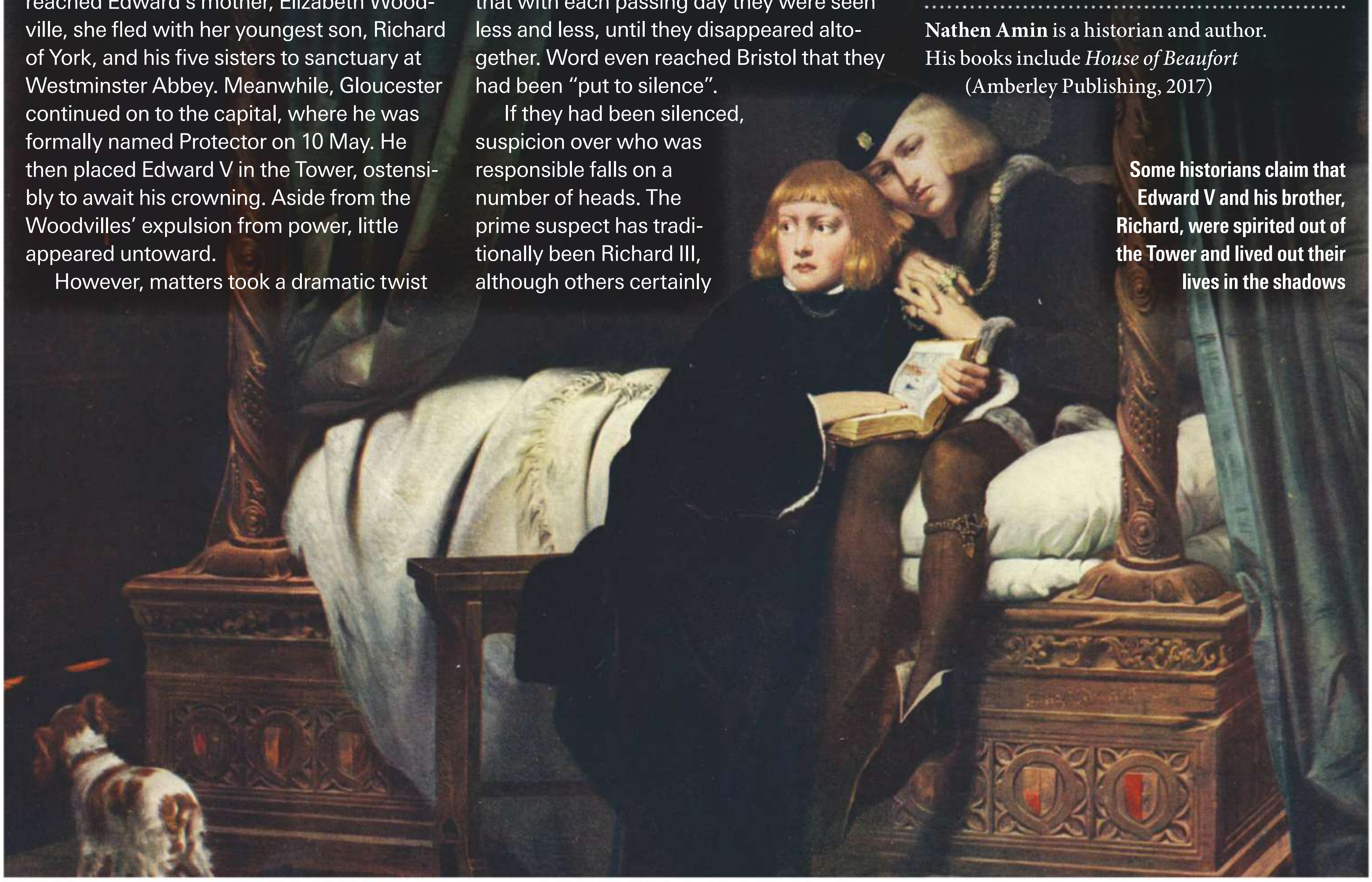
But what of the disinherited boys? Contemporary accounts are guarded. According to one, they were seen playing in the Tower grounds, though another noted that with each passing day they were seen less and less, until they disappeared altogether. Word even reached Bristol that they had been "put to silence".

If they had been silenced, suspicion over who was responsible falls on a number of heads. The prime suspect has traditionally been Richard III, although others certainly benefited; no one can deny that Margaret Beaufort and her son, Henry Tudor, gained a great deal by capitalising upon rumours the boys had died to garner support from Yorkists formerly loyal to Edward IV.

Another theory that has recently gained traction is that one or both princes survived and were spirited away under the cover of darkness. Indeed, some came forward claiming to be the missing Yorkists: just less than a decade later, Perkin Warbeck was attempting to convince anyone who would listen that he was the younger of the boys, spared by a compassionate cut-throat. That Warbeck later rescinded his claims has only muddied the waters.

The fate of the princes remains compelling to this day – more than 500 years since they were last seen in public. And whether one believes that the boys were slain by those they trusted, or conversely spared this savage fate and instead sentenced to live out the rest of their lives in the shadows, the debate stubbornly rumbles on.

Nathen Amin is a historian and author. His books include *House of Beaufort* (Amberley Publishing, 2017)



Some historians claim that Edward V and his brother, Richard, were spirited out of the Tower and lived out their lives in the shadows

ALAMY

A c1590 map of English settlers landing at Roanoke Island. Their disappearance has been attributed to everything from shipwreck and enslavement to quiet resettlement

Why did an English colony vanish into thin air?

Chosen by **Malcolm Gaskill**

When Sir Richard Grenville landed 600 stinking, seasick men at Roanoke Island in July 1585, he had no inkling that a mystery would consume the island a scant five years later. His first concern was survival; and to survive on Roanoke, an island off the coast of what would later be North Carolina, the settlers would need help from the indigenous Secotans. But Governor Ralph Lane (one of the settlers) treated them brutally, so when the colonists ran low on food, Grenville had to return to England for supplies.

While Grenville was at sea, Lane, suspicious of an attack, led a raid that saw many of the Native Americans massacred, including their leader, Chief Wingina. The Secotans had been defeated, but the colonists were in disarray. A fortnight later, Sir Francis Drake rescued the survivors, including Lane. Grenville returned to Roanoke in the summer of 1586, then left.

In May 1587 John White, one of the original settlers, led a fresh cohort of settlers to Roanoke, among them his pregnant daughter Eleanor Dare. White was not a natural leader, and relations with the indigenous population were strained. Dwindling supplies again necessitated a trip back to England. So White bade farewell to his daughter and granddaughter, Virginia – the first child born in America to English parents.

An ongoing conflict with Spain meant that White was unable to return to Roanoke until 18 August 1590: his granddaughter's third birthday. But Virginia had vanished, along with the entire colony: 115 men, women and children were gone. White's home had been ransacked, his possessions scattered. But there were no graves or skeletons in sight. And, encouragingly for White, a prearranged code word 'Croatoan' – an island 50 miles south – had been carved into the palisade. Had his family managed to sail there? White didn't have time to find out. The hurricane season compelled him to sail back to Plymouth, leaving his questions unanswered.

Search missions failed. In 1609 a report reached London from Powhatan Indians that the Roanoke colonists had been killed, but this was unsubstantiated. In the early 18th century, visitors to Hatteras Island – as Croatoan was known – detected the influence of English culture. This revived old tales of pale-skinned, grey-eyed Native American children, suggesting the assimilation of Roanoke's settlers. However, DNA analysis is an obsolete avenue of investigation – requiring living relatives or bones – and it's believed that these pale-skinned indigenous children could have albinism, a condition more common among Native Americans than Europeans.

Even the colony's precise location remains unknown. Coastal erosion means the site is likely under water; a theory that was bolstered in 2002 when a swimmer found a 16th-century axe head.

Above all, the question of where the Roanoke settlers ended up remains an enigma – although a drawing of a fort, discovered in 2011 beneath a patch on a map by John White, seemed like a breakthrough. In 2017 archaeologists announced that they had found Elizabethan artefacts at the site, 50 miles west of Roanoke, but whether these belonged to the lost colonists is unclear.

Historical theories of the fate of the Roanoke colonists range from shipwreck, enslavement by the Spanish, reassignment to one of Sir Walter Ralegh's secret commercial operations, and quiet resettlement in Chesapeake Bay. A stone grave marker found in a North Carolina swamp in 1937, supposedly inscribed by Eleanor Dare but dismissed as a forgery, may well be genuine after all. Somehow, the more we learn, the more the mystery deepens. Only one thing is certain: the case on Roanoke will be not closed any time soon – even if it can never be solved.

Malcolm Gaskill is professor of early modern history at the University of East Anglia

HAVE YOUR SAY We're running a **poll** to discover what you, our readers, think is history's greatest mystery. To cast your vote, simply go to *historyextra.com/greatest-mystery*

ALAMY

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

MA VICTORIAN GOTHIC: HISTORY, LITERATURE AND CULTURE (DISTANCE LEARNING)

Explore 19th-century Gothic cultures, and the fears, wonders, and dark imagination of the Victorian era through a rich and fascinating range of historical, literary and folkloric texts. Probe the darker side of the era, focusing on the cultural tensions between the Victorian anxieties of crime, poverty, slums, and degeneration, and the Victorian enchantment of superstition and folklore, performance magic, and Victorian celebrity culture.

FIND OUT MORE:
W port.ac.uk/victoriangothic
E hss enquiries@port.ac.uk

port.ac.uk

UNIVERSITY OF PORTSMOUTH

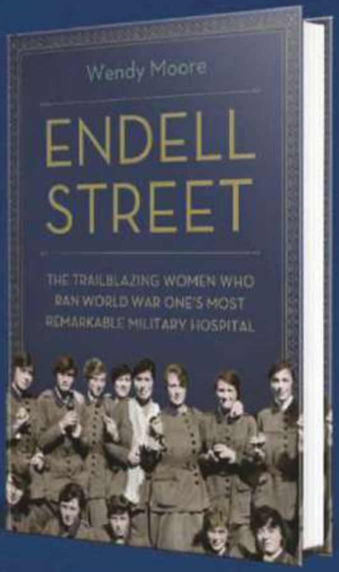
MA NAVAL HISTORY

Our established MA Naval History online course offers a unique opportunity to study the history of the Royal Navy at postgraduate level. Studied either full time or part time by distance learning, you will have the option to blend your online study with archival visits and enrichment activities both in the UK and abroad. This includes unparalleled behind-the-scenes access to both the National Museum of the Royal Navy's experts, archives and historic ships in Portsmouth and Lloyd's Register in London.

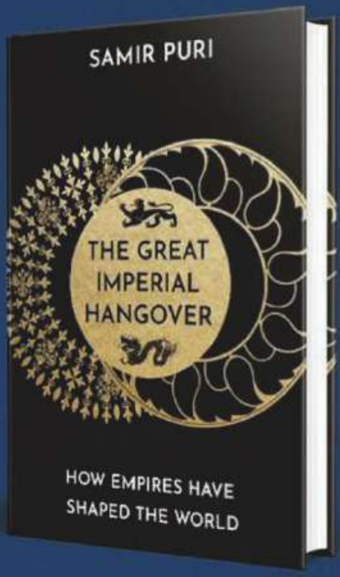
FIND OUT MORE:
W port.ac.uk/naval history
E hss enquiries@port.ac.uk

port.ac.uk

Essential History from Atlantic Books


Wendy Moore
ENDELL STREET
THE TRAILBLAZING WOMEN WHO RAN WORLD WAR ONE'S MOST REMARKABLE MILITARY HOSPITAL

THE FORGOTTEN STORY OF ONE WW1 LONDON HOSPITAL THAT WAS STAFFED ENTIRELY BY WOMEN.


SAMIR PURI
THE GREAT IMPERIAL HANGOVER
HOW EMPIRES HAVE SHAPED THE WORLD

A GROUNDBREAKING BOOK THAT EXPLAINS HOW THE WORLD'S HISTORY OF EMPIRES STILL SHAPES OUR LIVES AND POLITICS TODAY.

'How can a spectacular story like *Endell Street* just disappear? Luckily for us, it fell into the hands of one of our finest biographers. Wendy Moore's rich storyteller's voice has brought back the lives and achievements of these brave and brilliant women.'

Andrea Wulf, author of *The Invention Of Nature*

'Masterly. I found new insights on almost every page.'

Paul Strathern, author of *Rise and Fall: A History of the World in Ten Empires*

AVAILABLE NOW

BBC HiSTORY MAGAZINE

Save when you subscribe to the digital edition

20
BBC
HiSTORY
QUEEN MARY
Bloody or brilliant?
MEDIEVAL SCOTLAND'S CRY FOR FREEDOM
Sex, scandal and stalkers: A short history of celebrity
HILARY MANTEL ON CROMWELL'S DOWNFALL
"The next crisis is never more than a heartbeat away"
20th Anniversary Special
BRITAIN'S BESTSELLING HISTORY MAGAZINE
History's Greatest MYSTERIES
Where is Cleopatra's tomb?
Was there really a Trojan War?
Why did the Roanoke colony vanish?
Where is the Roman Ninth Legion?
Who built Stonehenge?
What happened to Amelia Earhart?
Were the princes in the Tower murdered?
Surviving the Great Plague
The crusaders' Muslim allies
At home with the Victorians
MEDIEVAL MAGIC
VICTORY
Why the Allies triumphed in WW2
TUTANKHAMUN UNMASKED
Anne Boleyn
DEADLY RIVALS
Victorian slum life
ENGLAND'S BLOODY REFORMATION
Shakespeare's radical vision
The PRINCES in the TOWER
THE CELTS
Why did the peasants really revolt?
11 November 1918

Available from

GET IT ON Google play

zinio™

amazon apps Available on kindle fire

BBC History Magazine is Britain's bestselling history magazine. We feature leading historians writing lively and thought-provoking new takes on the great events of the past.

When plague struck the English capital i
1665, the rich fled, t
economy tottered a
70,000 people were
sent to an early grav
As the world battles
coronavirus,
Vanessa Harding
reveals how
Londoners reacted
to pestilence in
the 17th century
"Lord have mercy on London"
BBC
HILARY MANTEL ON CROMWELL'S DOWNFALL
HiSTORY
20th Anniversary Special
History's Greatest
MYSTERIES
Where is the Roman Ninth Legion?
Who built Stonehenge?
What happened to Amelia Earhart?
Were the princes in the Tower murdered?
Surviving the Great Plague
At home with the Victorians

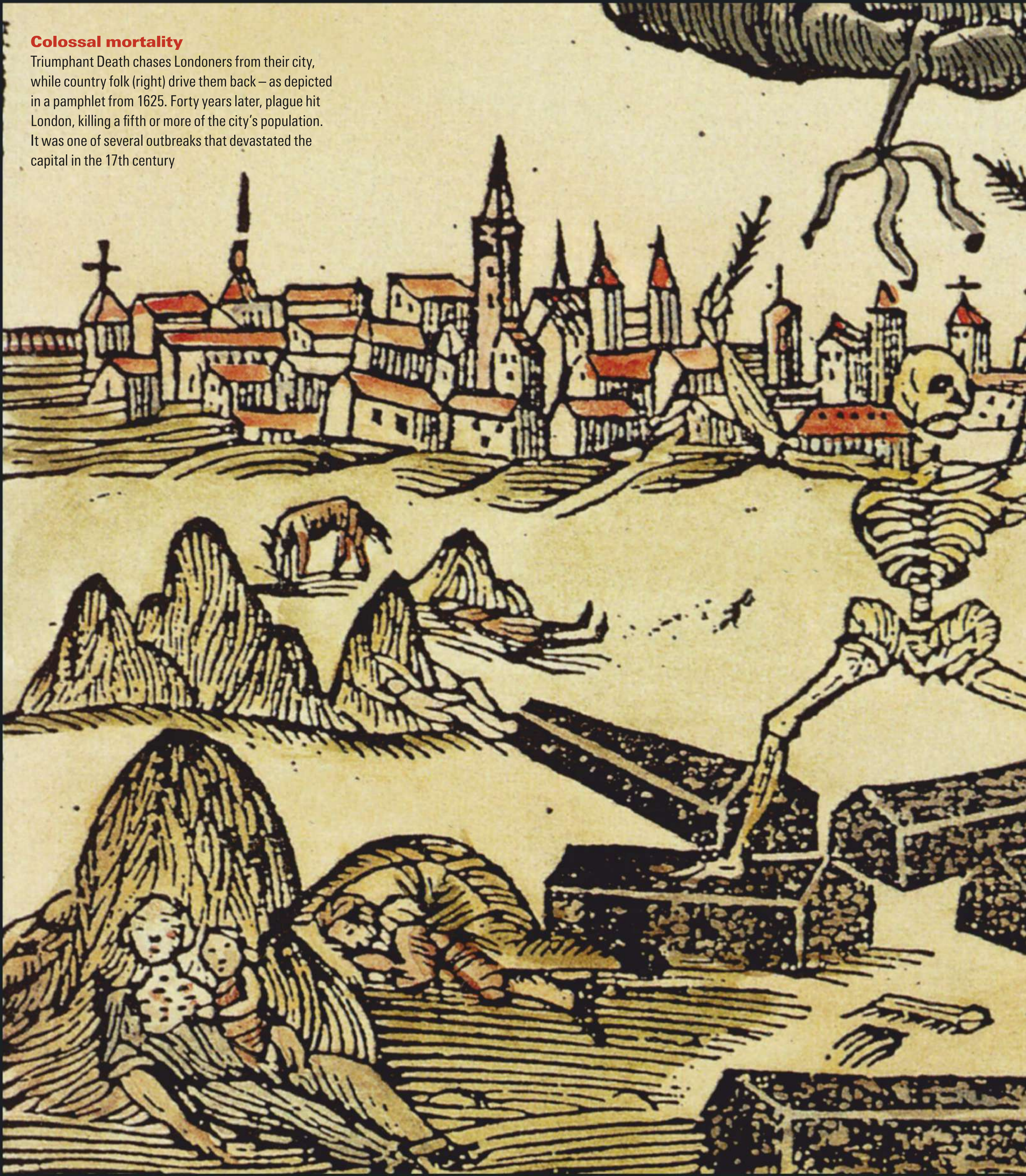
Enjoy our Premium App experience now available from

GET IT ON Google play

zinio™

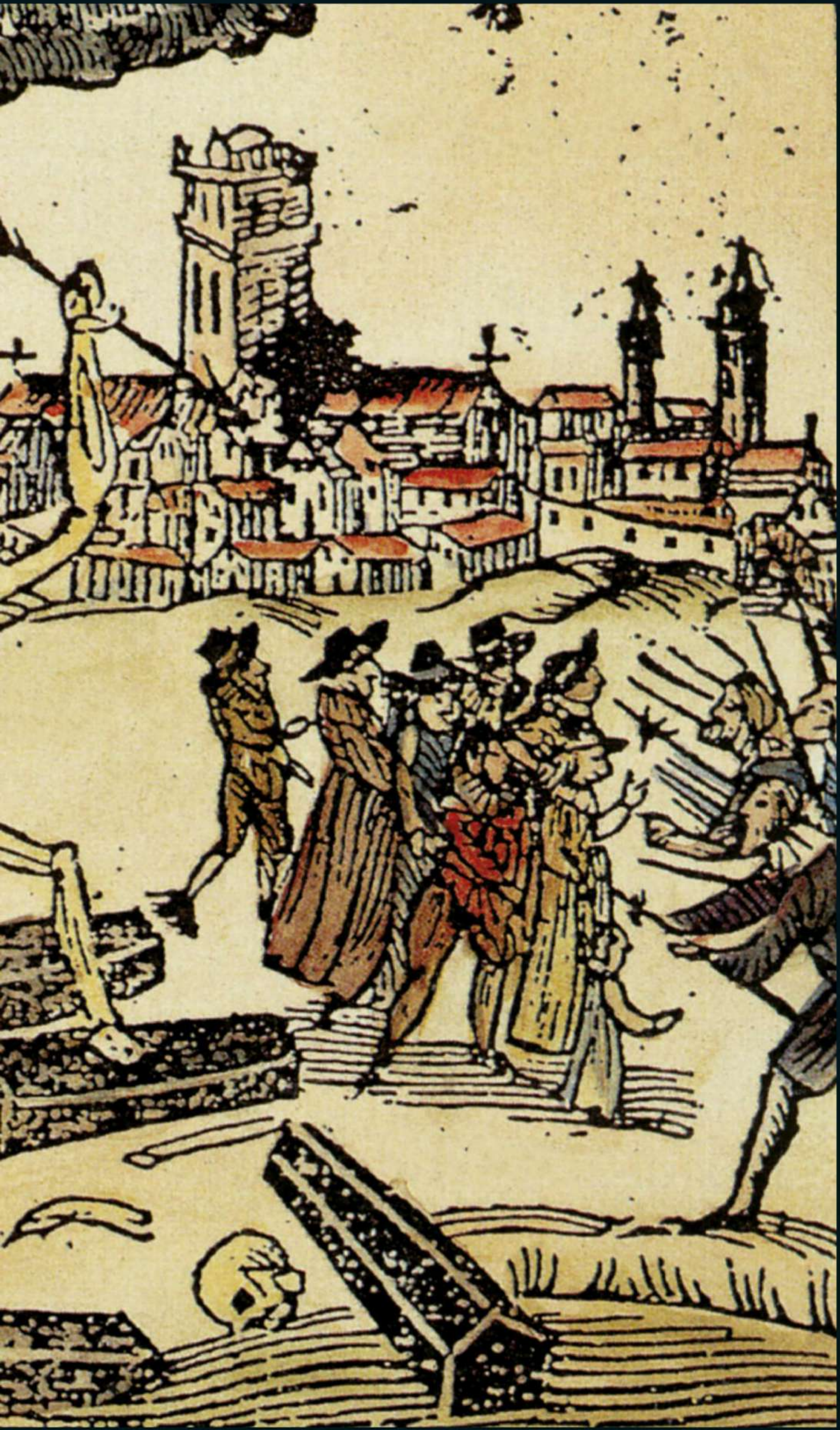
amazon apps Available on kindle fire

BBC HiSTORY MAGAZINE



Colossal mortality
Triumphant Death chases Londoners from their city, while country folk (right) drive them back – as depicted in a pamphlet from 1625. Forty years later, plague hit London, killing a fifth or more of the city's population. It was one of several outbreaks that devastated the capital in the 17th century

"Lord have mer



MARY EVANS

When plague struck the English capital in 1665, the rich fled, the economy tottered and 70,000 people were sent to an early grave. As the world battles coronavirus, **Vanessa Harding** reveals how Londoners reacted to pestilence in the 17th century

rcy on London"

January 1665 opened with "a fine hard frost". Samuel Pepys, a rising young government official, just short of his 32nd birthday, shared a dinner of a good venison pasty and a turkey with his family, and reflected with satisfaction on his good health and increasing wealth and esteem. 1664 had ended "with great joy to me", "everything else in the state quiet, blessed be God", apart from preparations for conflict with the Dutch. And even the formal declaration of war in March was welcomed with optimism and a rush of nationalistic pride. An early naval victory, in June 1665, seemed to fulfil all hopes.

But by that time, London knew it was menaced by a growing epidemic: plague deaths were increasing in number and spread. Pepys first mentions rumours of plague at the end of April, and notes seeing houses shut up in Drury Lane on 7 June. Although this was probably the first time he had seen "two or three houses marked with a red cross upon the doors, and 'Lord have mercy upon us' writ there", he had no doubt what this "sad sight" meant.

As Pepys and other Londoners watched in horror, plague deaths mounted rapidly over the summer, from tens to scores to hundreds to thousands, spreading right across London and its suburbs. In the worst week, 12–19 September, more than 7,000 plague deaths were reported, before the epidemic slowly subsided. By the end of the year, more than 70,000 people had died of plague in London and its suburbs, and the city's economy and society were severely shaken.

Localised and urban

1665 is known to posterity as the year of the Great Plague because of its magnitude, and because it was the last such outbreak. But it was not the only plague epidemic to hit the capital. Bubonic plague, caused by the bacillus *Yersinia pestis*, had been present in England since the Black Death of 1348–51, when perhaps a third to a half of the nation's population died, though since then epidemics had become more localised and more urban, rather than nationwide.

London suffered a succession of plague epidemics in the 16th and 17th centuries, of which those of 1563, 1603 and 1625 may have been as severe in relative terms as 1665. More people are known to have died in 1665 than in any other epidemic, because London was by then so much larger, but the overall mortality rate in all four was probably about the same, around a fifth to a quarter of the capital's population. 1665 is also the best-documented outbreak, thanks to the survival of official records, private letters and diaries, and, not least, Daniel Defoe's popular novelistic *Journal of the Plague Year*, published in 1722 but drawing on handed-down personal knowledge of the epidemic.

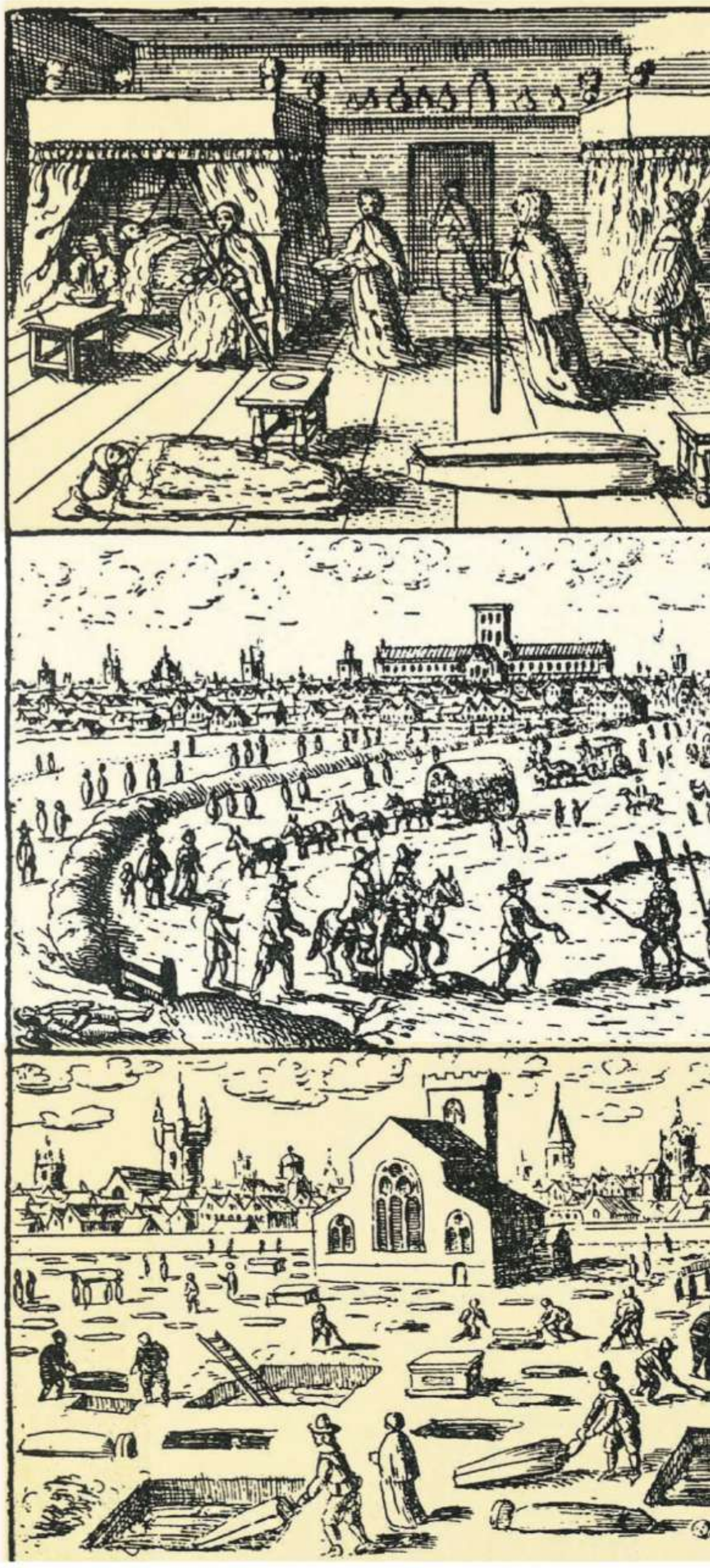
So what do these eyewitness reports tell us about the impact of the plague on the city's psyche – and what weapons did the authorities employ in an attempt to slow the destructive spread of the outbreak?

Familiarity with plague meant that the reactions of London's governors were guided by precedent. A key element in the official response to plague in early modern London was the collection of plague mortality data, originally intended for official consumption but evolving by the early 17th century into the weekly Bills of Mortality – summaries of deaths and plague deaths by parish published as broadsides or handbills by the Parish Clerks' Company. They were compiled from returns from individual parishes, and printed under strict protocols to ensure that information went first to the crown and Privy Council, and to the City of London.

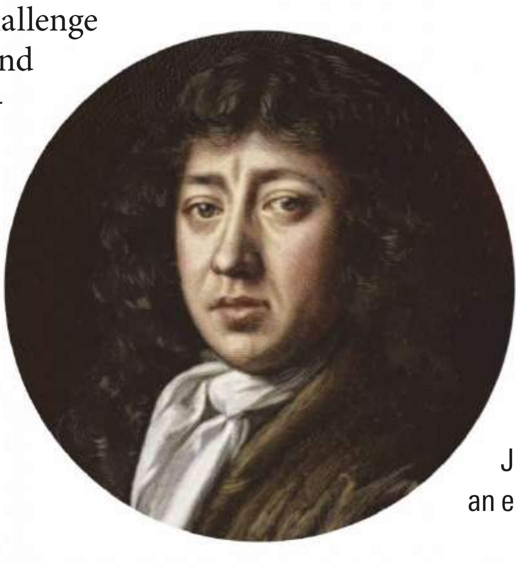
At its simplest, the justification for collecting the information on a regular basis was to detect the onset of an epidemic – a sustained rise in weekly death totals in the early summer was a pretty good indication – so that those with responsibilities could plan their strategies. The contemporary statistician John Graunt observed in 1662 that people read the weekly bills to see "how the burials increase, or decrease… and withall, in the plague-time, how the sickness increased, or decreased, that so the rich might judge of the necessity of their removall, and tradesmen might conjecture what doings they were like to have in their respective dealings".

Rising plague mortality triggered the issue of the Plague Orders, a set of regulations for public and private action originally drawn up by the Privy Council in the 16th century, based on continental practice. Their issue set in motion the machinery for confronting and combating the disease and managing its impact. Officials were appointed and instructed. Regulations covered the quarantining of infected persons and houses, and their support. They also addressed burials, the disposal of household goods, the challenge of keeping the environment clean and of getting rid of dangerous or disorderly elements.

Even if the orders were not fully observed – as Pepys documents, both in his observations and through his own behaviour, being often out after the official curfew of 9 o'clock – they provided a framework of expectation and delineated the hierarchy of responsibility. In addition to the Plague

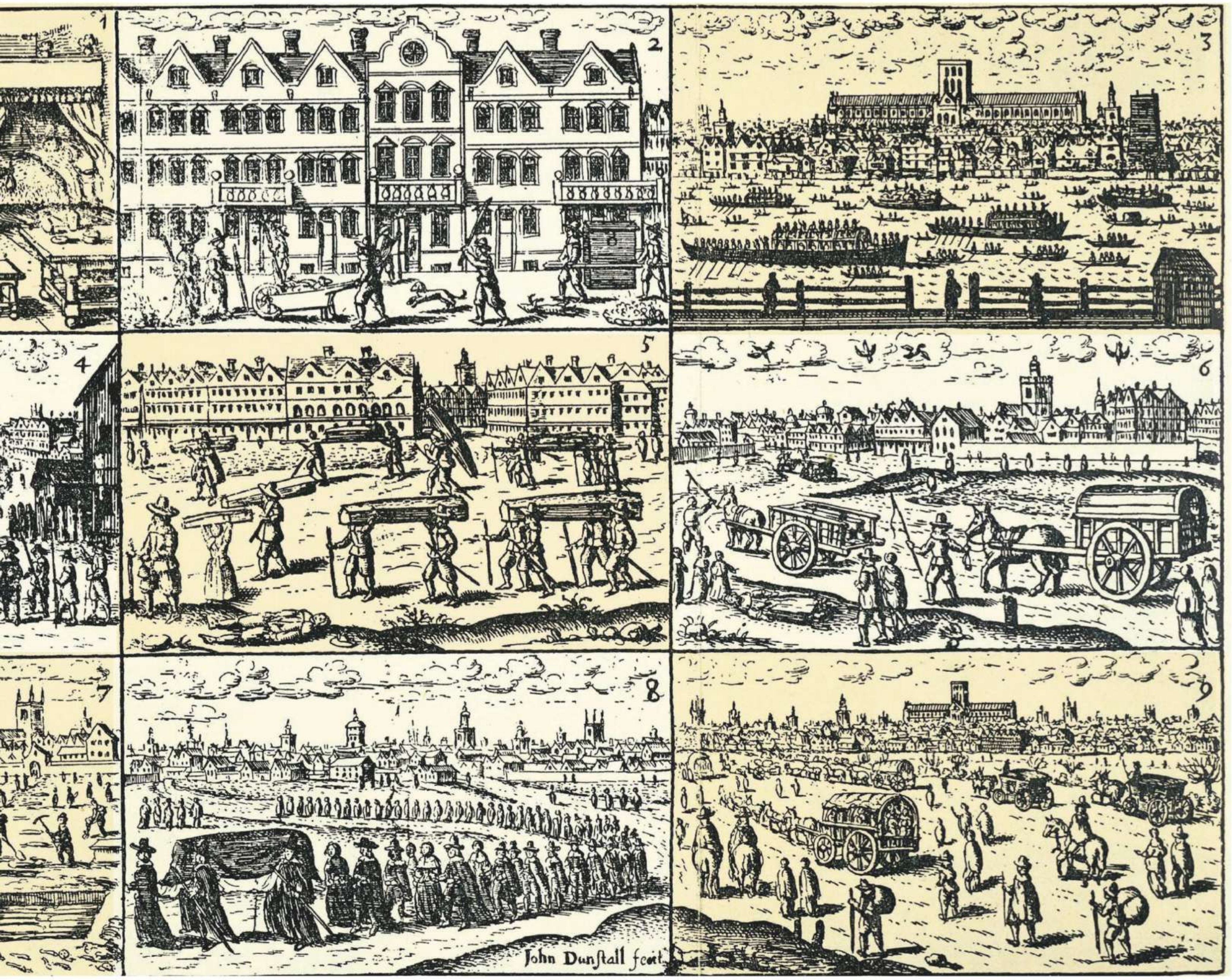


A mosaic of suffering
A depiction of the Great Plague in a contemporary broadsheet shows scenes including: a person laid out on the floor of a bedchamber next to a coffin (top left); coffins being placed in mass graves (bottom left); people carrying coffins (centre); a funeral procession (bottom middle); people fleeing London by river and by land (top and middle right), and returning to London (bottom right)



When the diarist Samuel Pepys saw red crosses daubed on houses in Drury Lane in June 1665, he knew that an epidemic was at hand

GETTY IMAGES



GETTY IMAGES

Orders, the mayor and aldermen of the City of London meeting through the summer issued a stream of other precepts. These covered everything from the expansion of accommodation at the city's pest-house (isolation hospital) outside Cripplegate, through to the appointment of physicians and surgeons, and the closure of grammar, dancing and fencing schools, to the provision of further burial space for the dead.

The worst mortality

The main burden of dealing with plague fell on London's 130 parish vestries, local committees ordinarily responsible for managing burial and poor relief, and now faced with growing demands on their resources. They were expected to collect information on plague infection, to enforce quarantine by shutting up infected houses, to support quarantined households who could not support themselves, and to find ways of burying the soaring total of bodies.

The vestrymen were leading local residents, but they weren't the chief actors here. Most of the heavy lifting was done by a wide cast of characters that included the searchers (employed to inspect the sick and the dead and report on causes of death), the parish clerk (who collected and recorded the names of those buried, and sent weekly totals to Parish Clerks' Hall), and the churchwardens (who kept track of expenditure and distribution). Sextons, corpse-bearers and gravediggers were also key figures in local networks.

These local systems continued to work remarkably well, though under increasing strain as the scale of the epidemic rose and as officials succumbed. The parish of St Giles Cripplegate, scene of some of the worst mortality in the epidemic, lost its sexton and three of the churchwardens. The parish clerk's wife also died. The smaller St Bride Fleet Street lost two churchwardens, one after another, and the widow of the first was still making up the accounts some months later.

The Plague Orders give us a good idea of official thinking on the likelihood of person-

As Pepys and other Londoners watched in horror, plague deaths mounted rapidly, from tens to scores to hundreds to thousands

to-person infection, with their insistence on quarantine, restricting assemblies and gatherings of people, curfews and the cleansing of bedding.

However, the spiritual aspect was equally important. In an age when religious belief was virtually universal, and embedded in notions of authority and governance, many saw exceptional events and disasters as evidence of divine intervention, and sought ways to appease and avert judgment. The Plague Orders set out the actions to be taken "for preventing and avoiding of infection of sickness" with the caveat "if it shall so please Almighty God". Fasts and days of repentance were prescribed as a first measure, and sermons drew on the rich store of biblical texts and precedents. The orders had a moral element as well as a medical one, attacking a range of public gatherings of an ungodly nature, including "disorderly tipling in taverns, alehouses, coffee-houses and cellars… the common sin of this time, and greatest occasion of dispersing the plague".

Craving remedies

The responses of ordinary Londoners to the epidemic were as diverse as London's population. A handful of individuals left personal writings of some kind, while the flood of popular and more learned publications gives some indication of the appetite for information, advice and remedies. Many of the personal accounts come from educated, professional men: Symon Patrick, rector of St Paul's Covent Garden; John Allin, nonconformist minister residing in Southwark; Richard Smyth, retired city law-officer and book collector; and Samuel Pepys. There are few contributions from women or working people, but these viewpoints are still quite diverse, from the anxious and deeply serious Allin to the somewhat insouciant Pepys.

There were common concerns, especially over whether to stay or leave. One widely remarked feature of the 17th-century plagues was the alacrity with which the wealthy left the town for country retreats, something that evoked criticism and resentment.

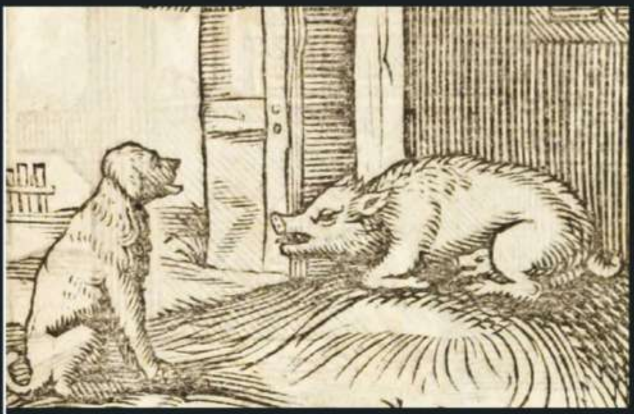
Both Patrick and Smyth cited the classic tripartite advice of the physicians in time of plague – leave quickly, go a long way off, return slowly ("better than three apothecaries' shops well stocked", according to one) – though both in fact remained. Patrick, who had no wife or family in London, felt obliged to stay for his ministry, since "here is no body to performe any duties here but myself only". Smyth examined the arguments for and against, drawing on the works in his extensive library, but also seems to have concluded that he should stay. Pepys sent his wife and household out of town, but remained himself

HOW TO SURVIVE THE PLAGUE

Five ways in which our 17th-century ancestors waged war on pestilence

1 Consign yourself to quarantine

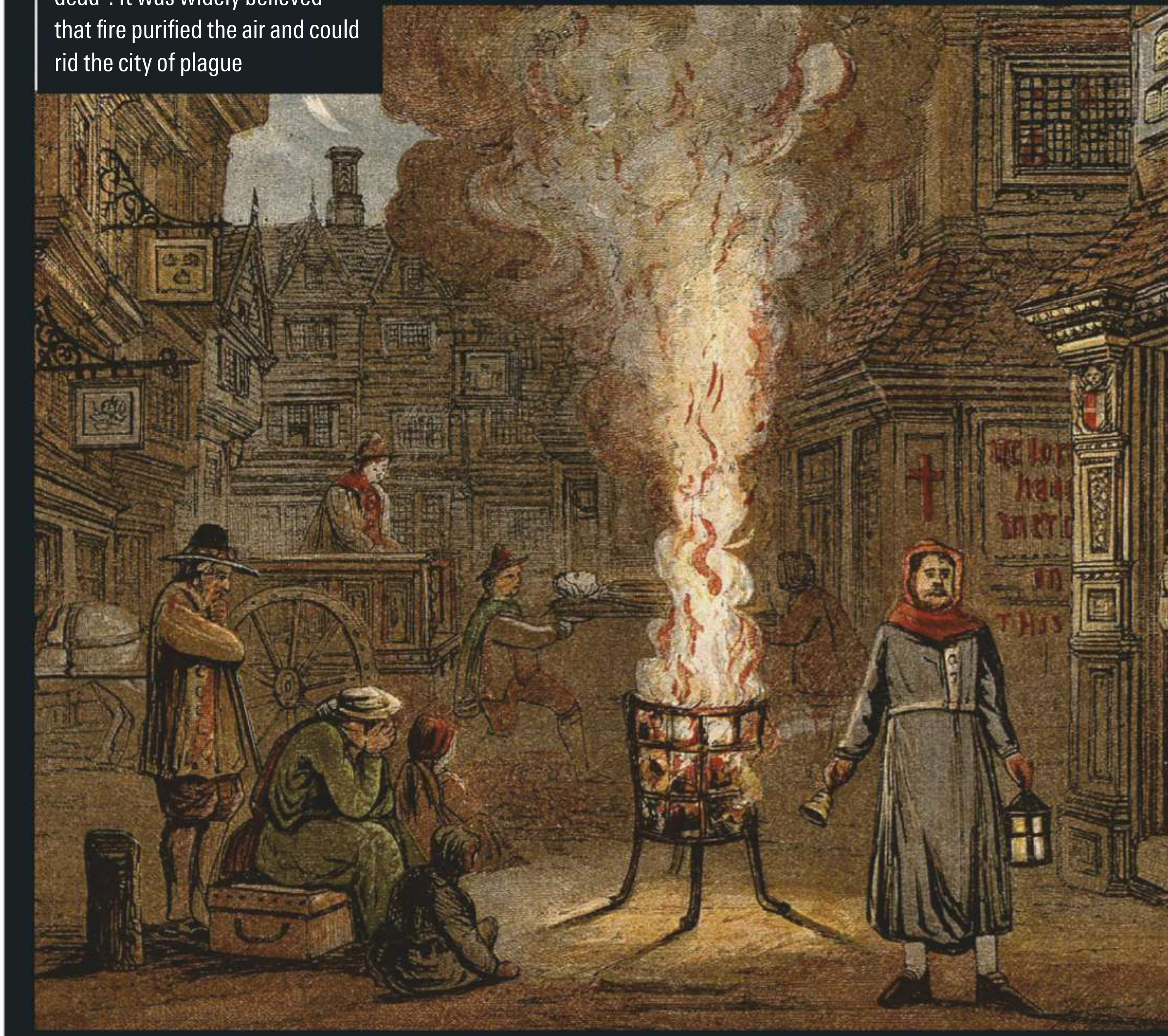
Houses in which anyone fell sick of plague were ordered to be shut up, marked with a red cross and "Lord Have Mercy Upon Us", and watched so that no one entered or left for four weeks, to prevent the spread of infection. This certainly happened, but was much resisted, and was hard to enforce; contemporary sources suggest that, by the later weeks of the epidemic, enforcement was failing. It remains unclear whether quarantine really helped to contain the disease.



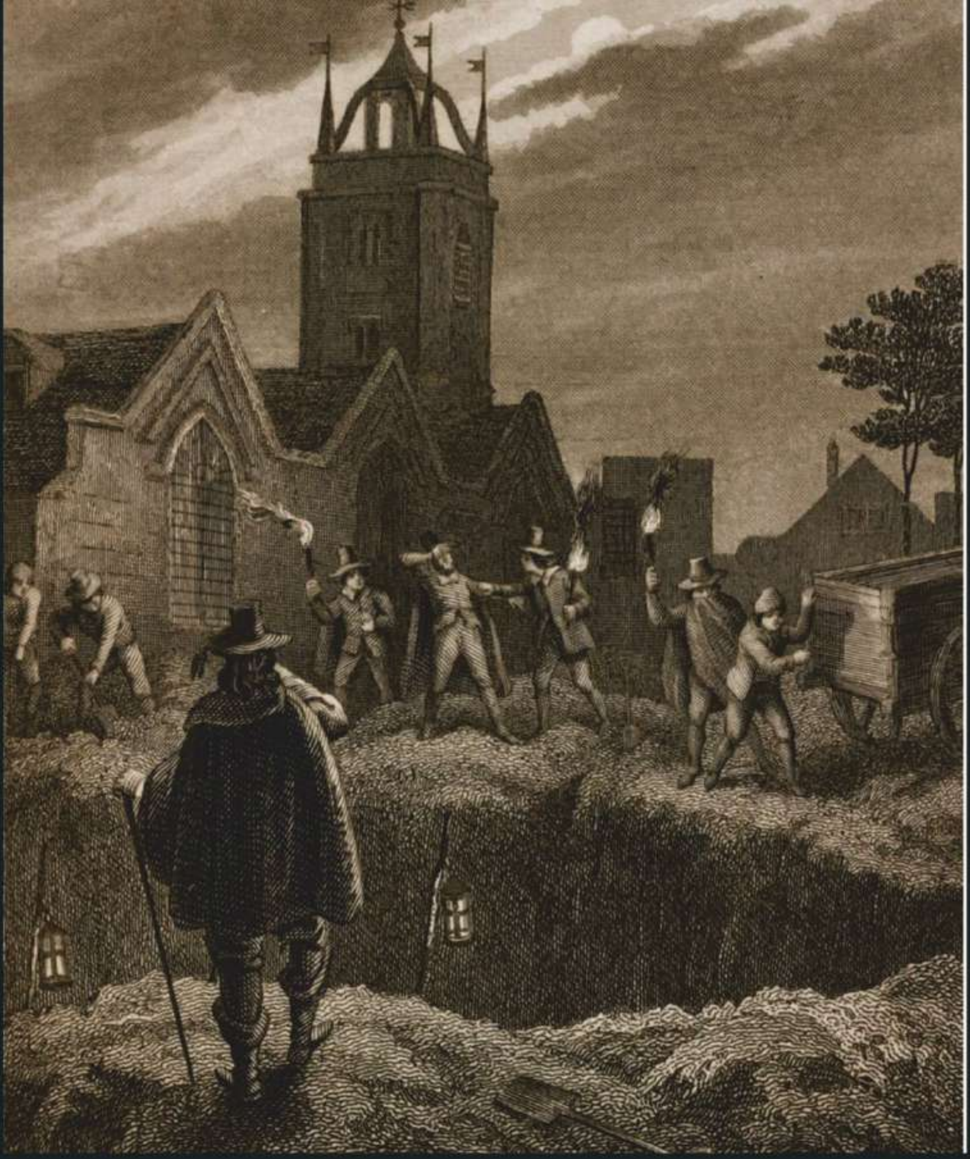
2 Steer clear of filth and dung

Orders that streets be kept clean, rubbish removed and laystalls (dung-heaps) placed at a distance from habitation reflected the belief that plague was generated by corrupt airs or 'miasma' arising from dung and filth. The ban on keeping "Hogs, dogs [both shown above in a woodcut] or cats, or tame pigeons, or conies" in the city, and the orders that wandering pigs were to be impounded and stray dogs killed, probably arose from the same association of foul smells with sickness.

WELLCOME IMAGES/ALAMY



A fire burns as officials urge Londoners to "bring out their dead". It was widely believed that fire purified the air and could rid the city of plague



Under the cover of darkness, men empty bodies into the 'Great Pit' in Aldgate, as depicted in a 19th-century engraving

4 Bury the dead at night

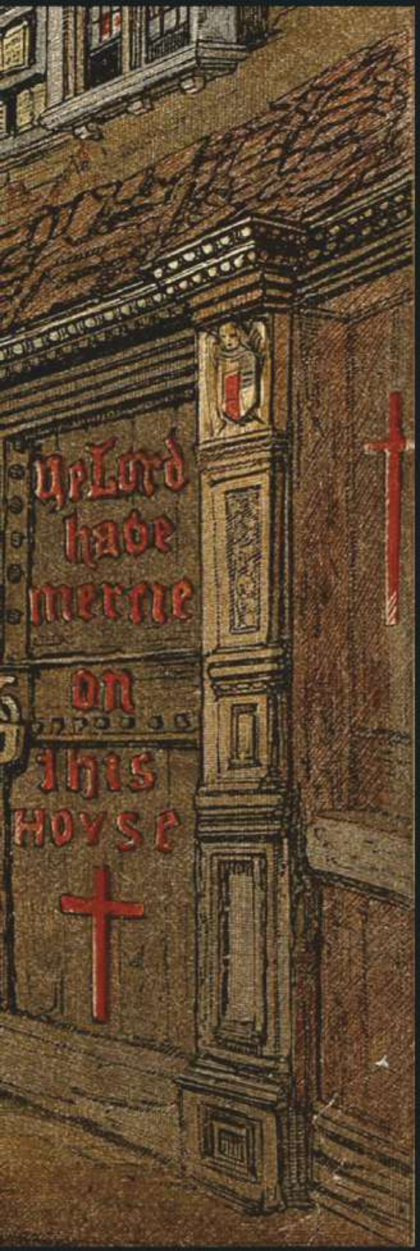
The Plague Orders proscribed funeral processions, and mandated burial of the plague dead at night, to avoid public gatherings and perhaps to reduce the impact on morale. By August, however, mortality was so high that the nights weren't long enough to bury all the dead. Pepys came across well-attended burials in daylight, to his wonder and fear. Though burial in city churches and churchyards was permitted, mortality was such that thousands were buried in the public graveyards near Bethlem Hospital and at Bunhill Fields, or in new and unconsecrated grounds.

WELLCOME IMAGES/ALAMY

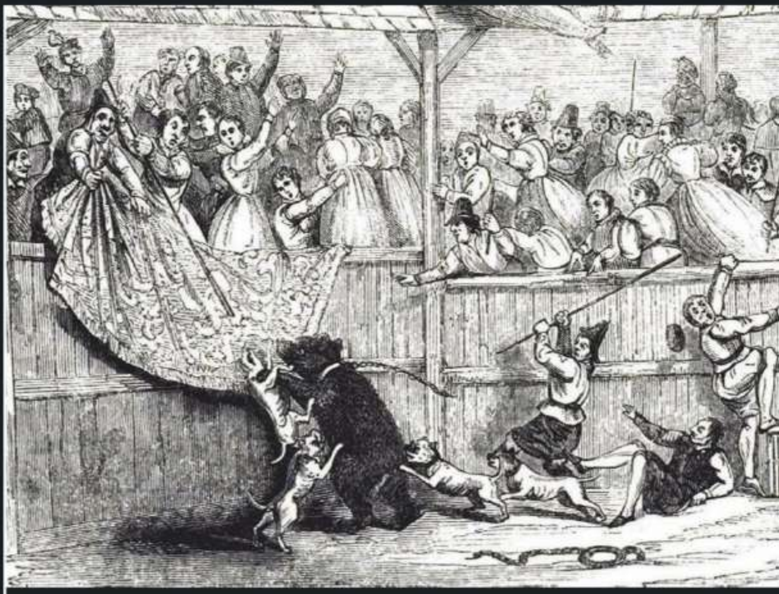
3 Fumigate your clothes

It was believed that infection could be carried in textiles, and second-hand clothes dealers were strictly forbidden to buy or sell goods from infected houses. The bedding, clothing and hangings of the sick were to be "well aired with fire, and such perfumes as are requisite", before being used again. If human ectoparasites played a role in spreading the disease, as seems likely, this ruling could have had some useful effect.

Sweet-smelling herbs were burned in fumigation torches (like this later example) in an attempt to disinfect the homes of the sick


Ye Lord have mercie on this HOVSE

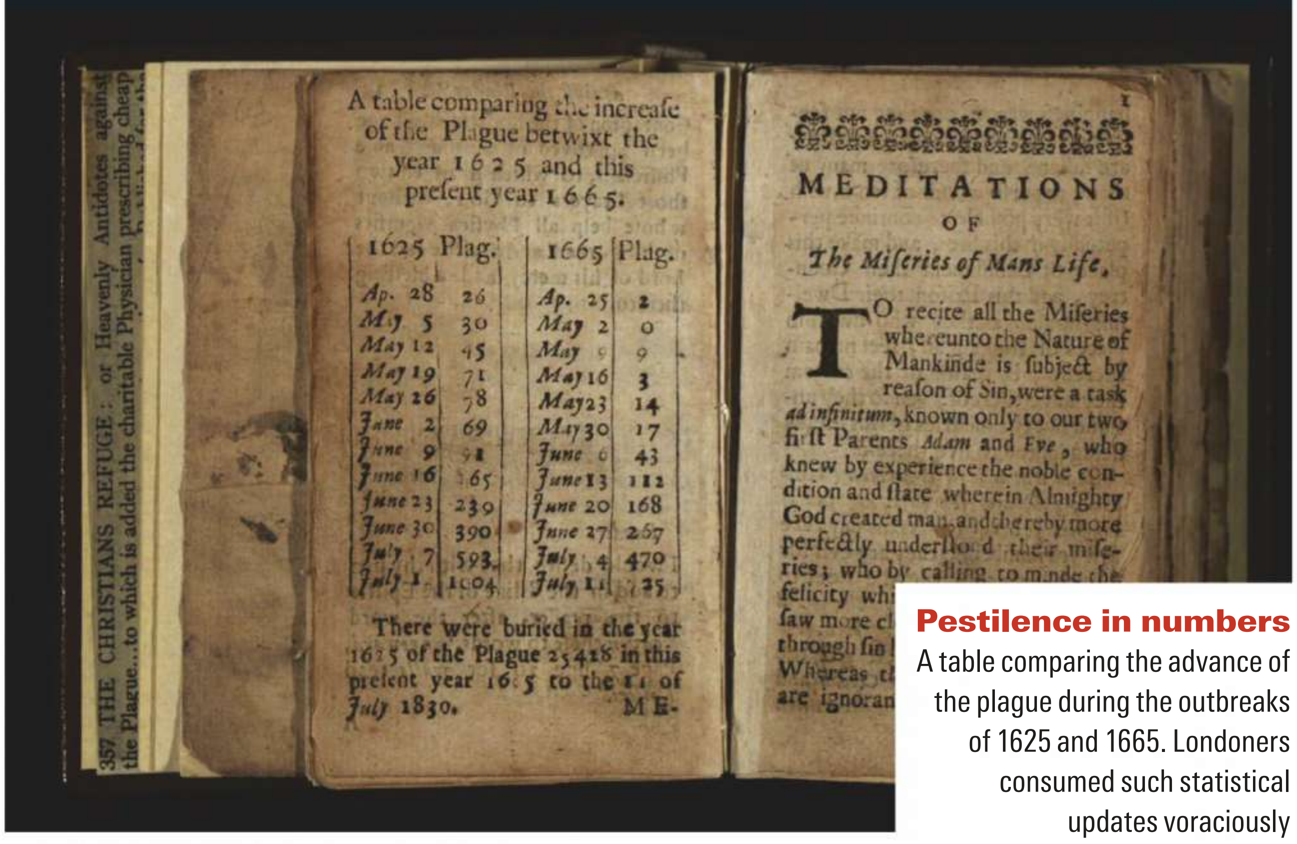
The bedding and clothing of the sick were to be "well aired with fire, and such perfumes as are requisite"



Bear-baiting was one of the 'ungodly' pastimes deemed deserving of severe punishment

5 Always take the moral high ground

Assemblies of any kind, potentially allowing the infected and the well to mingle, were restricted, but those where the object was immoral or ungodly, such as "playes, bear-baitings, games, singing of ballads, buckler-play", were to be "severely punished". Moral and medical concerns likewise combined in the attack on "the multitude of rogues and wandering beggers that swarm in every place about the city", a moral affront to orderly society as well as "a great cause of the spreading of the Infection".



A table comparing the increaſe of the Plague betwixt the year 1625 and this preſent year 1665.

1625	Plag.	1665	Plag.
Ap. 28	26	Ap. 25	2
May 5	30	May 2	0
May 12	45	May 9	9
May 19	71	May 16	3
May 26	78	May 23	14
June 2	69	May 30	17
June 9	91	June 6	43
June 16	165	June 13	112
June 23	239	June 20	168
June 30	390	June 27	267
July 7	593	July 4	470
July 1	1004	July 11	725

There were buried in the year 1625 of the Plague 25418 in this preſent year 1665 to the 11 of July 1830.

ME-

MEDITATIONS

OF

The Miſeries of Mans Life,

TO recite all the Miſeries whereunto the Nature of Mankinde is ſubject by reaſon of Sin, were a task *ad infinitum*, known only to our two firſt Parents *Adam* and *Eve*, who knew by experience the noble condition and ſtate wherein Almighty God created man, and thereby more perfectly underſtood their miſeries; who by calling to minde the felicity wh

ſaw more c

through ſin

Whereas t

are ignoran

Pestilence in numbers

A table comparing the advance of the plague during the outbreaks of 1625 and 1665. Londoners consumed such statistical updates voraciously

One minister noted that many Londoners attempted to ward off plague by wearing amulets "made of the poison of the toad"

for most of the time. However, both Pepys and Allin noted the premature return of the absentees, who ironically "mett with what they fled from": "divers fresh houses, since the return of fresh persons hither, visited [infected by the plague]".

Londoners anxiously awaited, digested and discussed the weekly Bill of Mortality, charting the rise and eventual decline of the epidemic. Pepys comments frequently on the weekly totals: "in great trouble to see the bill this week rise so high" (10 August); "8,252 dead in all, and of them, 6,878 of the plague – which is a most dreadfull Number" (7 September); "Great joy we have in the weekly bill, it being come to 544 in all, and but 333 of the plague" (30 November).

Allin and Patrick quoted the weekly total in their letters to country correspondents, often adding information on local numbers. Rumour abounded, and stories circulated of multiple deaths – "many whole familyes of 7, 8, 9, 10, 18 in a family totally swept away" – and sudden sickness – a minister "preached Sunday sennight [a week] before, but was dead with his wife and three children by Thursday night". Correspondents asked anxiously about friends and colleagues, and for confirmation of reports of death or survival.

Profiting from death

The Bills of Mortality were an official publication, but there was evidently demand for a range of cheap commercial publications, too, and a marketing opportunity for remedies and medicaments. Commemorative or composite 'bills', brought out by a number of independent printers during the epidemic, combined text, images and statistics, reminding Londoners of other historic or more recent plagues, proffering remedies or prayers, even providing them with blanks to fill in the weekly death totals.

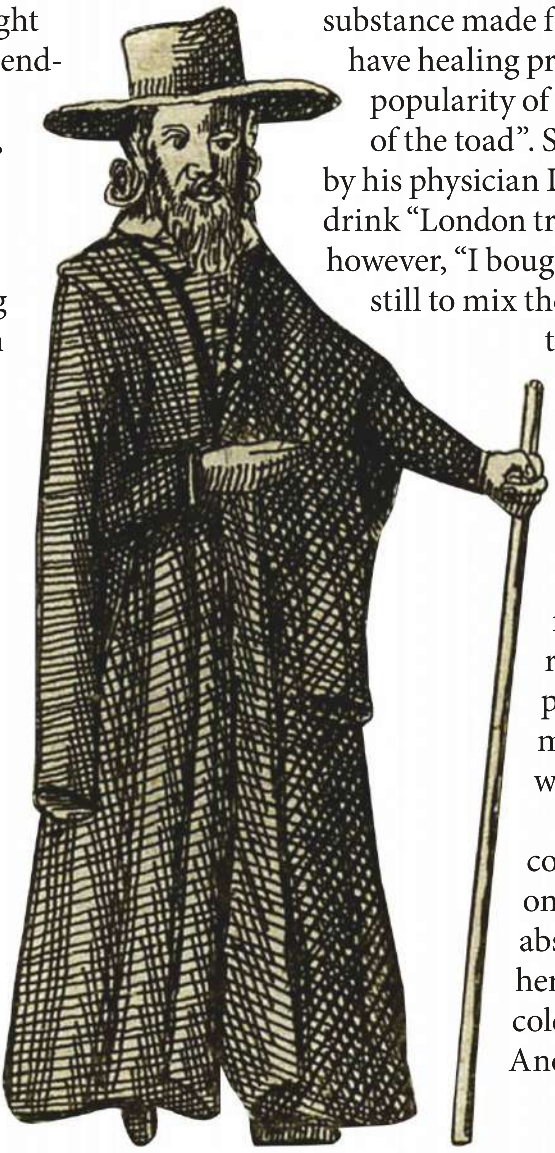
Ministers published sermons and "consolatory discourses" for their flocks. Doctors of all kinds published broadsides and pamphlets, interspersing advice, recipes and advertisements for proprietary waters, tinctures, ointments and fumes. The popularity of such tracts indicates a demand for information, but no consistency of approach: Londoners embraced a variety of medical theories, from traditional Galenism (the system of medicine that included the theory of the four humours) to more modern 'Chymicall' approaches, and even astrological medicine (in which celestial bodies were thought to rule over the human body).

John Allin, who practised medicine as well as acting as a minister, keenly pursued a substance made from algae that he believed to have healing properties, but also noted the popularity of amulets "made of the poison of the toad". Symon Patrick was directed by his physician Dr Micklethwaite to mix and drink "London treacle and lady Allen's water"; however, "I bought both presently, but forgat still to mix them: only now and then I take a little treacle". 'London treacle' was a compound of multiple substances, obtainable from apothecaries rather than made at home. It seems to have been a popular preventative or remedy against plague, recurring in numerous publications, along with many different 'plague waters' or distillations.

Careful diet was another common prescription, with one physician advising abstention from "the boiled herbs of colliflowers, cabbage, coleworts, spinage, and beets". Another recommended readers "overfill not your bodies with meate which is hard of disgesture, for it breeds ill humors".

For all the remedies that Londoners ingested, and foods they avoided, the impact of the plague on their city was immense. London's parish registers tell hundreds of short stories of the epidemic, recording the successive deaths of members of the same family, and the decimation of local communities. Symon Patrick and John Allin each listed the deaths of clerical colleagues; Allin also recorded that "above seven score drs, apothecarys, and surgeons are dead of this distemper in and about ye City since this visitation". Richard Smyth listed more than a hundred individuals whom he knew, or knew of, who died in the epidemic.

For many of those who survived, the huge mortality formed an occasion for reflection and consideration, with even Samuel Pepys admitting that "we have gone through great melancholy because of the great plague". But although mortality dwindled during the following months, and business and social life began to recover, Londoners had yet to face another cataclysm, less deadly but perhaps even more disruptive: the fire that broke out on 2 September 1666. H



Grim work

A contemporary depiction of a corpse bearer, employed by parishes to collect the dead and bring them for burial

TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

Vanessa Harding is professor of London history at Birkbeck, University of London. She will be discussing the Great Plague of 1665 on our podcast: *historyextra.com/podcast*

LISTEN You can listen to eyewitness accounts of the Great Plague, including from Samuel Pepys, on BBC World Service's **Witness History**: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/p03z2zv7*

BBC WORLD SERVICE

“Bad things snarl up into one ruinous inextricable knot”

The conclusion to **Hilary Mantel’s** *Wolf Hall* trilogy has been the publishing sensation of the year. Here she speaks to Rob Attar about how she pieced together the fateful final years of Thomas Cromwell’s life

ALAMY/GEORGE MILES

You pick up Cromwell's story in 1536. How much has he changed from the man we met in *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*?
When *The Mirror & the Light* begins, it seems a crisis is behind Cromwell; Anne Boleyn's head has fallen. But the court is still in a panic. History tells us that no more of the queen's 'lovers' would be tried and executed – but no one knew that at the time. Possibly even the king could not tell what might emerge from the tangle of bizarre accusations that flew around in the early summer of 1536.

The defeat of the Boleyns clears a path for Cromwell, but the deals he has struck bring their own complications. The months after Anne's death are crowded, and even Cromwell is surprised by events that – disconcertingly – throw new light on her final days. Anne never ceases to haunt him, but there's no time to repine when the next crisis is never more than a heartbeat away.

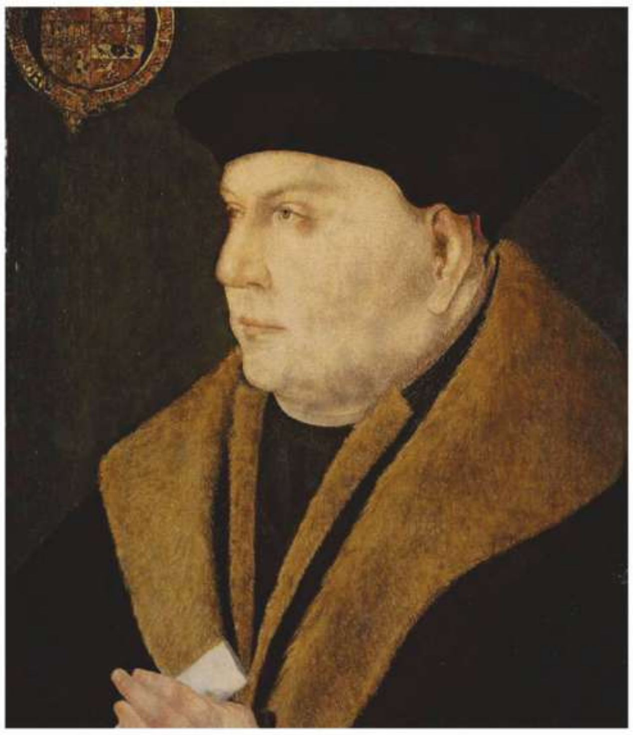
Having already risen so far, what are Cromwell's ambitions in these years?
Religious reform and – central to the project – the acceptance by the king of an English Bible, and its dissemination. He hopes to secure the future of the Reformation by creating stakeholders in the new order – those families who have received leases of monastic land will not want to return their assets to Rome. Cromwell wants to keep the peace, protect trade and ensure better governance. The difficulty is meeting such objectives in a time of crisis, when France and the Holy Roman Emperor are threatening to invade. His achievements can seem negligible, compared to what he projects. But all the same we owe to Cromwell the beginning of England's systematic knowledge about itself – the parish registers of baptisms, marriages and deaths. At the time, this initiative was not gratefully received. It was seen as an instrument for surveillance and taxation.

Beyond the domestic agenda, it seems that Cromwell is looking to a reconfiguration of Europe – there is a chance for England to forge alliances with those who, like Henry, have broken with Rome. Henry's opposition to doctrinal change slows the process, but you can see Cromwell's efforts for the future – not only is he moving towards the Lutheran princes, but towards the Swiss reformers.

He was a creative politician. The scope of his influence across government makes you understand why he's a nightmare for biographers – do you take him day by day, or topic by topic? A novelist perhaps has an advantage here; she can judge her subject's priorities from the inside. Sitting in the council chamber, Cromwell may be imagining something way outside the agenda – he might be thinking about Greek philosophers, or his father, or his dinner.

How are his early life experiences still shaping this later-period Cromwell?
He doesn't come on to the historical record much before the 1520s, so his early life is largely my imaginative construct – both his rough and difficult upbringing in Putney, and his European travels. The record suggests that his father took a turn towards respectability in his later years, but in my telling, it's the early years that shape Thomas. He has a resourcefulness and resilience that comes from adversity, but also a driving sense of need and lack. He must dominate to survive, he must buttress himself with offices and material goods, and perhaps he doesn't know when to stop? He has to act the humble courtier, but it doesn't come naturally to him.

I tend to resist, though, situating the cause of his fall in some political misjudgment or personal trait. His problem was structural. It wasn't easy to break into what were seen as the natural ruling classes.



Vile blood Thomas Cromwell, shown in a painting from the 1530s, made plenty of enemies among the common people of England

PREVIOUS PAGE:
Ben Miles and Lydia Leonard star as Thomas Cromwell and Anne Boleyn in the stage version of *Wolf Hall*. Hilary Mantel drew inspiration from the play when writing *The Mirror & the Light*

BRIDGEMAN

Despite his incredible advancement, did Cromwell's humble background still count against him at this point?
When I began this project, tracking Cromwell through mentions of him in narratives of the king's reign and biographies of other courtiers, I was amused at how often the adjective 'low-born' cropped up, as if commentators were still judging him by the values of his own time. I found it fascinating to work out who had laid a trail for Cromwell, who had set precedents; he wasn't the first commoner to rise high in the service of the state. Most men of humble origin rose inside the church's structure. Wolsey is the familiar example; once he was a cardinal, it didn't matter that his father was a butcher.

Nowadays we see ambition as natural, and in some circumstances a virtue, but in Cromwell's day it was a vice – you were defying God, trying to get above the station in which you were born. It is no surprise that the noblemen around the king resented Cromwell as someone who was usurping their influence. But the common people didn't applaud his efforts either. One of the demands of the popular uprising of 1536 was to have all "vile blood" removed from the king's council. Henry backed Cromwell – it would have been weak to sacrifice him to the rebels – but he also tried to justify himself to Cromwell's enemies, claiming that he had just as many noble advisors as at the start of his reign. Preserving the status quo was vital – to everyone except Cromwell.

One of the most important episodes in this period is Henry VIII's disastrous marriage to Anne of Cleves. Why do you think Cromwell's plan ended in such failure?
I ought to say that it was also Henry's plan – very much so. The Duke of Cleves was a military and economic ally for him at a time when he badly needed one. The idea that he was nudged and fooled into the marriage doesn't hold water, while the notion that Henry publicly and rudely rejected Anne, so embedded in folklore, is simply wrong.

When Anne arrived at Calais, a welcome party from England was waiting – the courtiers were very taken with her, despite a language barrier they took to be temporary. She was friendly but dignified, and there was seemingly no fault in her appearance or self-presentation. The weather kept them in port, but they entertained themselves with supper parties and teaching Anne to play the king's favourite card games; they embarked for Deal in good heart. No one could have predicted that Henry, anxious "to nourish love", would ride down the country to a disastrous first meeting for which the bride was unprepared.

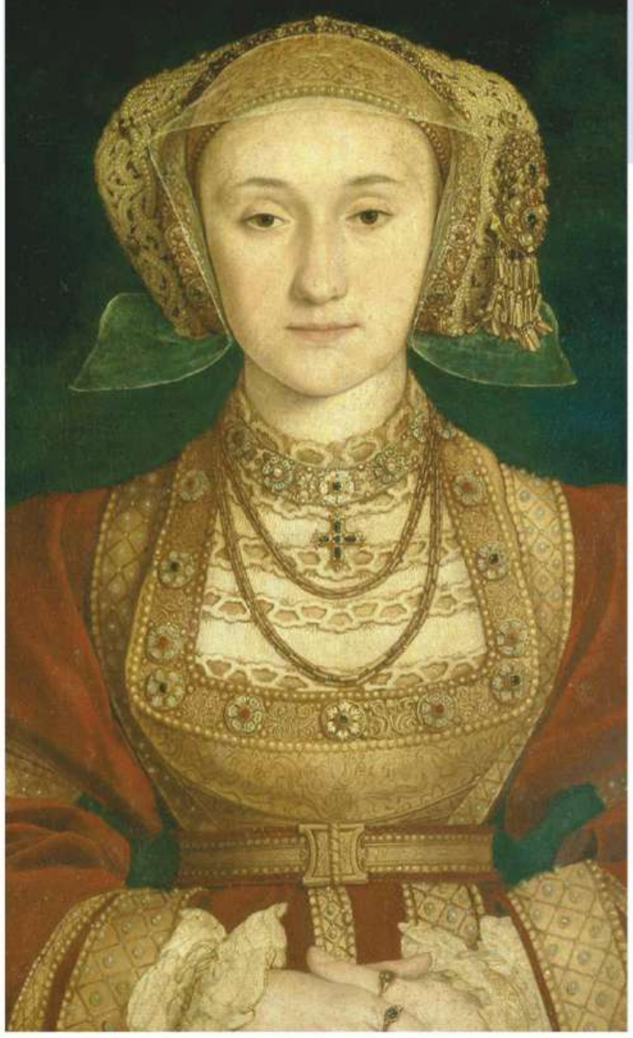
My book doesn't give the usual version of that meeting. We don't need to look at a woman through Henry's eyes; there are other possibilities. It was some time before the king's inner circle realised that he was unable or unwilling to consummate the marriage. It is difficult to see what Cromwell could have done, except try to keep the king in a good humour and warn of the consequences of upsetting the German princes.

But then the international situation took a turn – the Holy Roman Emperor and the king of France, who had been in alliance, fell out. As the threat of invasion receded, the Cleves alliance became less necessary. Ironically, it was Cromwell's friend Thomas Wyatt who helped drive a wedge between the great princes. He was following his instructions as English ambassador, but he unwittingly helped bring his patron down, because Henry saw his chance to slide out of his unwanted marriage and into another – ultimately disastrous – match to the Duke of Norfolk's niece, Katherine Howard.

How much had Henry, and his relationship with Cromwell, changed by this time?
One puzzling aspect of Cromwell's career is the promotions the king gave him in the last months of his life. He gave him the title of Earl of Essex, and also made him lord great chamberlain, a position the Earl of Oxford's family considered theirs by custom, if not by right. Henry was defying tradition. It seemed as if he was deliberately pushing his minister into an exposed situation, in a way that would energise his enemies. Henry's actions are often baffling, and we shouldn't look for too much rationality in human affairs. I have asked myself if he was afraid of his own creation; he does seem to have entertained, at least for a short time, the idea that Cromwell wanted to make himself king.

There are many different views on the cause of Cromwell's downfall in 1540. Which seem most important to you?
They all work together – fraught religious affairs in Calais, negotiations between the Holy Roman Emperor and Cleves, the king's failure to consummate his marriage, the tactical rapprochement between Cromwell's long-time opponents, and Henry's tendency to fall in love – in this case with Katherine Howard. You can argue over which factors matter the most, but I think they all matter.

At the time, it couldn't have been possible to rank them in the dispassionate manner of scholars safe in a library. It's natural for historians to hang on to a causative string – 'because this, therefore this, and so next this' – but that can make reality too simple. In real life, bad things don't happen sequentially, or fall into categories for timely consideration. They snarl up into one ruinous inextricable knot.



A welcome arrival? Hilary Mantel seeks to challenge popular assumptions about Henry's ill-fated marriage to his fourth wife, Anne of Cleves

All paths lead to Cromwell Mantel has spent more than a decade writing about Henry VIII's chief minister, to enormous acclaim

GETTY IMAGES/GEORGE MILES

> **"Nowadays we see ambition as natural, and in some circumstances a virtue, but in Cromwell's day it was a vice – you were defying God"**

Which characters, aside from Henry and Cromwell, were you especially drawn to in researching and writing this novel?
I wonder if Ralph Sadler is due for a fresh look. Sadler grew up in Cromwell's household, the minister taught him everything he knew, and he was one of the era's great survivors. He served Henry in his later years, then the child Edward VI, and then Elizabeth; he was still in harness as an aged man at the trial of Mary, Queen of Scots. You can visit the house he built as an up-and-coming young courtier; now known as Sutton House and in the care of the National Trust, it is in Hackney, in what were once green fields.

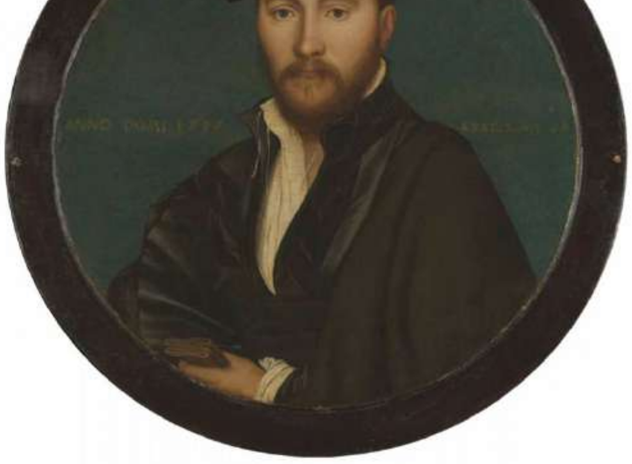
Are there any aspects of the story that offer parallels to more recent events?
One reader from Michigan has just written to me: "Thank you for… keeping your king so firmly in the 16th century and not making the Trump allusions that are so fashionable these days." This reader evidently agrees with me that there's no point writing about the past if what you really want to write about is the present.

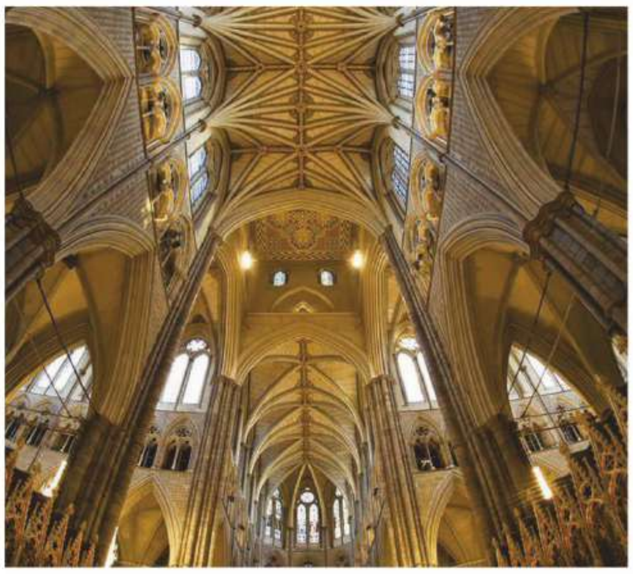
But that said, this book formed up against the background of the Brexit negotiations, and I couldn't help imagining what the cosmopolitan Cromwell would have said about the plan to shrink these islands back into themselves, instead of taking on a confident role in the wider world. From the example of the Pilgrimage of Grace, he would have understood the gulf between the centre and the regions, between urban and rural interests. He would have recognised the populist strand in the Brexit campaign, and the 'golden age' nostalgia that informed it.

Your books always draw heavily on historical research. Are there any sources that you found particularly helpful in writing *The Mirror & the Light*?
I seem to have spent years at my desk signed in to British History Online, combing through records, not in pursuit of a particular fact or theme but just trying to absorb the era through my pores, make myself fluent and enlarge my range of references. Much as I appreciate the guidance of standard biographies and sources like the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, I am always searching for the tiny, illuminating detail about a character or a situation that a biographer might not think is worth recording. These are most likely to be found in original sources. That said, some biographers are particularly attentive, insightful and elegant; I've lived closely with Susan Brigden's study of Thomas Wyatt, *The Heart's Forest*. Wyatt's poetry became very important to me – I learned that when you read it aloud, new possibilities emerge, sometimes startling ones.

It isn't only reading that has educated me; listening to music, looking at portraits and visiting locations have been important too. At Lambeth Palace, watching the book restorers at their patient and skilled trade, I learned what damage time and insects can do to the paper record. At Westminster Abbey I felt for the first time that particular aura of sanctity that surrounds the royal dead. By the Thames in Mortlake, my guide Helen Deaton told me: "Ship Lane has always been there" – simple words that plunged me back into Cromwell's early life. In Antwerp, Dr Guido Latré walked me around the English merchants quarter and explained the city's industries; at one point he hesitated over a translation, saying "The bleachfields?… no, not quite…" And as he said it, the central section of my book lit up. These moments are magic. They can't be anticipated or repeated.

Since the publication of the first two novels, highly successful stage and screen adaptations have been produced. Did these feed into *The Mirror & the Light*?
I greatly valued the TV version of *Wolf Hall* and *Bring Up the Bodies*. The only thing I'd have asked for, in an ideal world, is another couple of hours of screen time. I have faith in the team of Peter Straughan as writer and Peter Kosminsky as director, and I am looking forward to whatever I can contribute to the development of the next series. Meanwhile a stage version is in progress.


Great survivor A portrait believed to depict Ralph Sadler – a figure who fascinates Hilary Mantel. He served Thomas Cromwell and three Tudor monarchs


Aura of sanctity Visiting historical locations like Westminster Abbey helped inform Mantel about the world that Thomas Cromwell inhabited

> **" I am always searching for the tiny illuminating detail about a character or a situation that a biographer might not think worth recording "**

LISTEN

In 2017 Hilary Mantel delivered the **BBC Reith lectures** on history and culture. *bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08vkm52*

I have always felt a kinship with live theatre. I write in scenes, not chapters. I rehearse a big scene through repeated drafts; then I have stage fright. I find that I am plunged into the action, under bright lights. Working with Mike Poulton on the first two plays felt like a natural process, but also challenging and new. In the rehearsal room I was a beginner, and I think that at a late stage in your career you should take any chance to refresh your craft.

The shows moved on from Stratford-upon-Avon to the West End to Broadway, and by that time I had two notebooks open on my desk during rehearsals. One was for what was happening in front of my eyes, and one was for what was happening in my inner vision – the formation of the third novel. It was fascinating to watch actors create the characters and grow into their parts. Ben Miles, who played Cromwell, was one of the few people who read *The Mirror & the Light* as I wrote it, and we are now working together on the adaptation.

Historians are constantly reinterpreting Cromwell, partly, in recent times, as a result of your novels. How far does your reading of him now accord with the views of scholars?
Between the publication of my second and third novel, Tracy Borman was rethinking the subject in her biography; while I was finishing the trilogy, Diarmaid MacCulloch was stripping Cromwell studies back to first principles and writing a scholarly study that will be definitive. I believe I have had some influence, if only in bringing Cromwell firmly back to public attention, and building an interested public for these books and indeed for earlier work that has been neglected, like John Schofield's 2008 biography.

In conversation, Diarmaid MacCulloch and I have found that we see Cromwell in much the same way. The difference is that eventually, a fictional narrative weights itself towards the inner life. If all paths lead to Thomas Cromwell, I enjoy more diversions by the way. Historians want to move to a state of certainty, while an imaginative writer wants to move into an area of creative doubt. I am content to say, in the end: "He eludes me." H

Hilary Mantel is a novelist, who is best known for her *Wolf Hall* trilogy on Thomas Cromwell. The first two novels were both awarded the Man Booker Prize. The third volume, *The Mirror & the Light*, was published by Fourth Estate in March

GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE LIVE

Save the date

Chester History Weekend

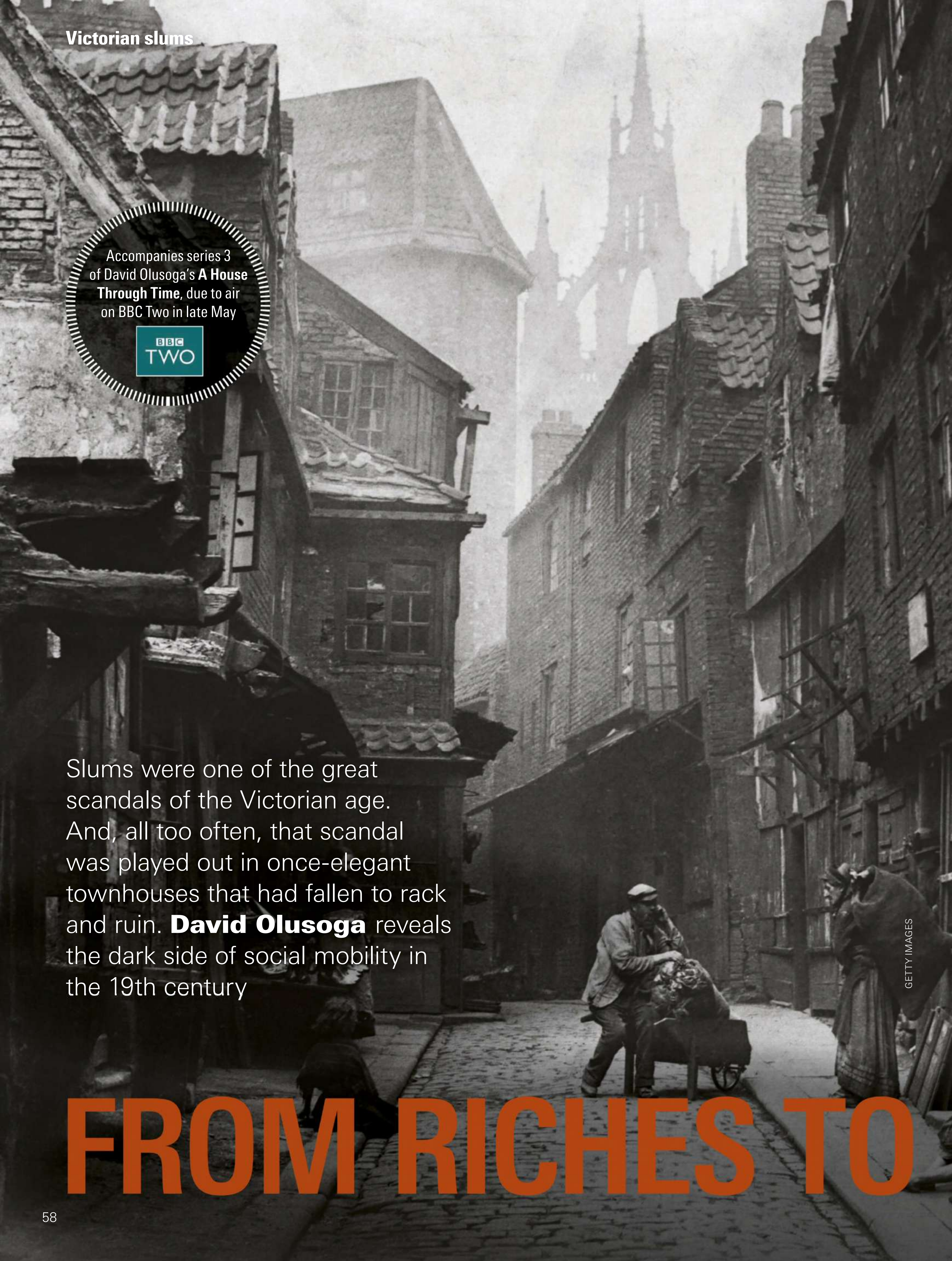
16–18 October 2020
Chester Town Hall

Winchester History Weekend

6–8 November 2020
Winchester Guildhall

historyextra.com/events

VICTORIA TETLEY/WINCHESTER CITY COUNCIL



Accompanies series 3 of David Olusoga's **A House Through Time**, due to air on BBC Two in late May

Slums were one of the great scandals of the Victorian age. And, all too often, that scandal was played out in once-elegant townhouses that had fallen to rack and ruin. **David Olusoga** reveals the dark side of social mobility in the 19th century

GETTY IMAGES

FROM RICHES TO

RAGS

Down on their luck
Ramshackle homes in a Newcastle slum, c1880. In one impoverished part of Tyneside, Victorian sanitary reformer Robert Rawlinson reported finding 71 people crammed into one large house

In 1849 a letter arrived at the offices of *The Times* newspaper. Its authors were a group of poor Londoners who lived on Church Lane and Carrier Street in what was then known as the St Giles Rookery. Their names, 54 of them in all, were listed at the end of the letter. The parish of St Giles today stands under the shadow of the Centre Point tower block, at the eastern end of Oxford Street, and includes the wealthy streets and squares of Bloomsbury. The St Giles of the 1840s was a very different place. Home to thousands of impoverished Londoners, many of them of Irish descent, it was an infamous slum, one of the capital's dirtiest and most unhealthy districts.

The letter sent by the slum dwellers to the newspaper editor, written in broken, misspelt, phonetic English, is one of the few documents through which we can hear the voices of the very poorest of our Victorian ancestors speaking directly into the historical record. They describe, in their own words, the appalling conditions in which they were forced to subsist.

Their plaintive appeal began: "Sur, – May we beg and beseech your proteckshion and power. We are Sur, as it may be, livin in a Wilderniss, so far as the rest of London knows anything of us, or as the rich and great people care about. We live in muck and filth. We aint got no priviz, no dust bins, no drains, no water-splies, and no drain or suer in the hole place."

Like the millions who today are forced to eke out meagre existences in the slums and favelas of the developing world, the poor of 1840s St Giles well understood the depth of their plight, and were well aware that the absence of basic amenities and elementary sanitation was the cause of their ill health. They rightly concluded that human beings should not be expected to endure such conditions and – after going on to express their entirely justifiable fear of a return of "the Colera" (the last epidemic had arrived 10 years earlier; the next was five years away) – they requested that the editor of *The Times* agree to "let us have our complaints put into your hinfluenshall paper, and… make our houses decent for Christions to live in".

Finally, they asked: "Preaye Sir com and see us, for we are living like piggs, and it aint faire we shoulde be so ill treted. We are your respeckfull servents in Church Lane, Carrier St., and the other corts."

If the slum dwellers of St Giles exhibited any naivety in their letter, it was their seemingly earnest hope that by appealing to the wealthy and the influential, via the pages of a newspaper of record, they might inspire those in positions of power to address their concerns and alleviate their plight.

The slums were one of the great scandals of the Victorian age. In his 1898 book *The Wonderful Century*, Alfred Russel Wallace, the eminent co-discoverer of the theory of evolution by natural selection, counted Britain's slums as being "among the most terrible failures of the century", a national disgrace that even risked undermining Britain's claim to regard itself as a great civilisation. In *Bleak House*, Charles Dickens, a writer whose literary and philanthropic attentions were often directed towards the slums, lamented that in the middle decades of the century "civilisation and barbarism walked this boastful island together".

Mazes of misery

In London, as in the nation's other great cities, slums existed in various forms and in multiple places – dismal enclaves of desperation and squalor, both small and large, scattered across the cityscapes. Near what is today King's Cross and St Pancras stations, for example, stood Agar Town, a maze of narrow, muddy streets lined with shanty houses. As the homes of Agar Town were built on land leased for just 21 years, they were constructed to miserably low standards. Some were even been built by their impoverished inhabitants from whatever materials they were able to procure.

Agar Town was in effect a purpose-built slum. Yet if a modern visitor were able to embark upon a tour of the Victorian slums, what might surprise them most is the size and grandeur of the many slum houses. This feature of the slums, one that was commentated upon by reformers, journalists and so-called 'social explorers', had come about because some slums had emerged when middle-class districts of the cities, their streets lined with desirable residences, fell out of fashion and were abandoned by the well-to-do. Frederick Engels, who visited St Giles a few years before the residents of the Rookery sent their letter to *The Times*, recalled seeing "tall, three or four-storied houses" that were "occupied from cellar to garret, filthy within and without, and their appearance is such that no human being could possibly wish to live in them".

Something of this pattern of decline and decay can be seen in the houses featured in the BBC Two series *A House Through Time*, of which I am the presenter. Series 3, which is set in Bristol and to be broadcast this spring, tells the long history of a large and elegant house in one of that city's older districts. What this house has in common with the stars of the previous two series – 62 Falkner Street in Liverpool and 5 Ravensworth Terrace in Newcastle – is that, while it was built as a home for a single wealthy family and their servants, in its later decades it was subdivided and became cheap housing for the poor.

Of the houses featured in the three series of *A House Through Time*, perhaps only 62 Falkner Street in Liverpool fell far enough down the social scale to be regarded as a true slum property. But all three houses at various moments teetered on the edge of the abyss. Across Britain in the 19th and early 20th centuries, thousands of similarly grand houses and some that were grander still, did become slums dwellings. For, no matter how architecturally elegant or well-appointed a house was, if the district in which it stood declined far enough, it was liable to be dragged under, converted into a tenement or a cheap lodging house and neglected by landlords, who were often absentees.

In 1842, Robert Rawlinson, the great Victorian sanitary reformer, reported that, "in our great sea-ports and inland manufacturing towns" stood homes that had been "originally erected for the merchant princes" but that were "now in ruins… having been the abodes of those possessing wealth, they are now the abodes of the improvident, of the vagrant, of the vicious, and of the unfortunate". The strange effect, Rawlinson noted, was that the poor lived amid crumbling grandeur and decorations intended for the former wealthy residents. "The quaint carving on the stone-work looks out of place, the walls are half in ruins, the gables are shattered, and foul weather-stains of damp blotch the surface. The staircase is darkened, its massive hand-rail and carved balusters are crippled and broken; the once firm stairs are now rickety and dangerous; the stucco-finished plastering is blackened and in holes…"

Going underground
The Metropolitan District Railway under construction in Craven Hill, London, c1868. Industrialisation often led the middle classes to flee their well-appointed residences near city centres

No matter how grand the house, if the district in which it stood went into decline, it could be dragged under

Polluting industries

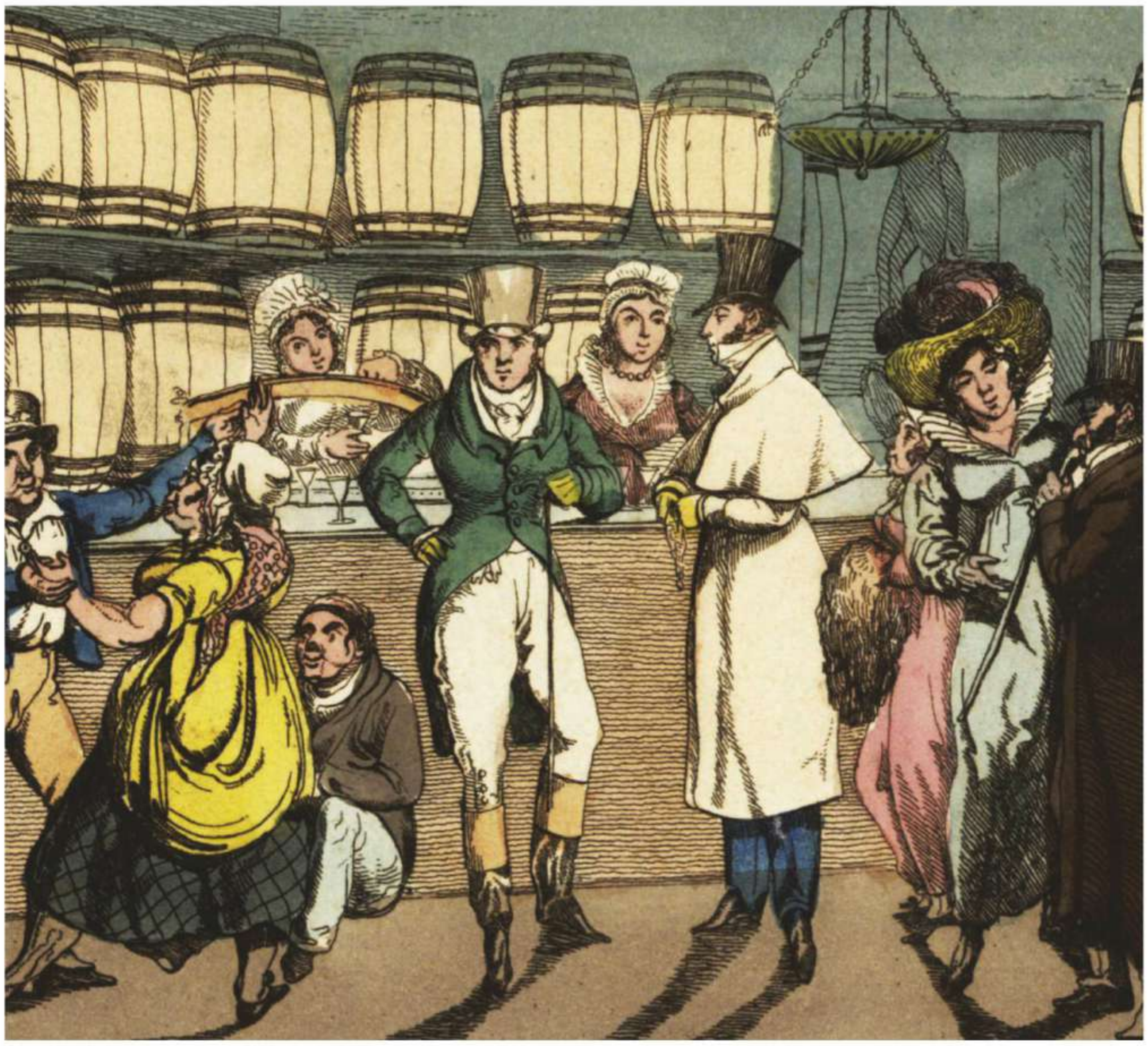
Between 1851 and the end of the 19th century, the population of Britain almost doubled. As the industrial cities burst at the seams, their poorest residents, along with the polluting industries upon which they often relied, expanded into the surrounding fields and farmland. But they also spread into earlier suburbs that had been built in previous decades, on what had then been the outskirts of town. The homes built in these districts had been designed for the affluent middle classes, people who had the means to pay rents far beyond those that the poor could afford – people who in many cases had moved to the suburbs in order to escape the pollution and the unhealthiness of the inner-city districts. When cities expanded, those genteel residents fled further afield, migrating to more distant suburbs that were often linked to the city centres by the omnibuses routes and later the railways. They left behind them three and four-bedroom townhouses in elegant streets that were then inhabited by the poor.

This process was so familiar that it was commented upon not just by sanitary reformers and journalists, but by novelists. In 1857, the writer Charles Manby Smith recounted the history of Strawberry Street, a fictional London address located in the very real suburb of Islington. When Strawberry Street was first built in the 1820s it consisted of a "double row of two-storied dwellings" that soon attracted "professional ladies and gentlemen, whose neat brass-plates informed you that they taught drawing and painting and japanning, and French, Italian and German, and the pianoforte and singing, and the practice of all kinds of musical instruments. Then there were clerks, managers and responsible persons employed in the city, who came home to their families in Strawberry Street, as regular as the clock, about seven in the evening."

By the 1850s, however, the population of London had increased by more than a million to reach a total of around 2.5 million, and Strawberry Street had been wholly "swallowed up in Babylon's bosom". No longer a fashionable street in a stylish inner suburb, the "professional ladies and gentlemen moved by degrees further north, and their places were supplied by a new class – by tradesmen's clerks, by foremen and overseers of workshops, men… who came home at all hours of the night, and let themselves out in the dark mornings of winter long before sunrising, and who let lodgings to help to pay the rent… the whole street on both sides of the way, with the exception of a very few houses, was transformed into a third-rate business street, and had lost all trace of its original neatness." When a factory opened up nearby, Strawberry Street was on its way to becoming a slum.

All slums were miserable and insanitary,

GETTY IMAGES



Slumming it
Regency dandies mix with Irish labourers and prostitutes in a gin palace in St Giles, London in an 1821 engraving. By 1849, conditions in the infamous slum were so bad that its residents had written to the editor of *The Times* to plea for help

Rise and fall David Olusoga outside the Bristol residence on which series 3 of *A House Through Time* is based. "Houses, as well as people, are capable of social mobility," he writes

ALAMY/BBC

but districts that had fallen from respectability to impoverishment, like Strawberry Street, had specific problems. Low wages meant that the poor who were drawn to them had to spend a higher proportion of their income on rent than the middle classes – they were victims of what today is termed 'housing stress' or 'rent poverty'.

To create accommodation that was within their limited financial reach, and in the hope of drawing as high a rental income as possible from their properties, landlords converted large homes that had been designed for single family habitation into tenements and lodging houses. Multiple small rooms were created out of once elegant dining rooms and parlours, using thin partition walls. These rooms were linked together by labyrinths of dark, windowless corridors.

Unavoidably insanitary

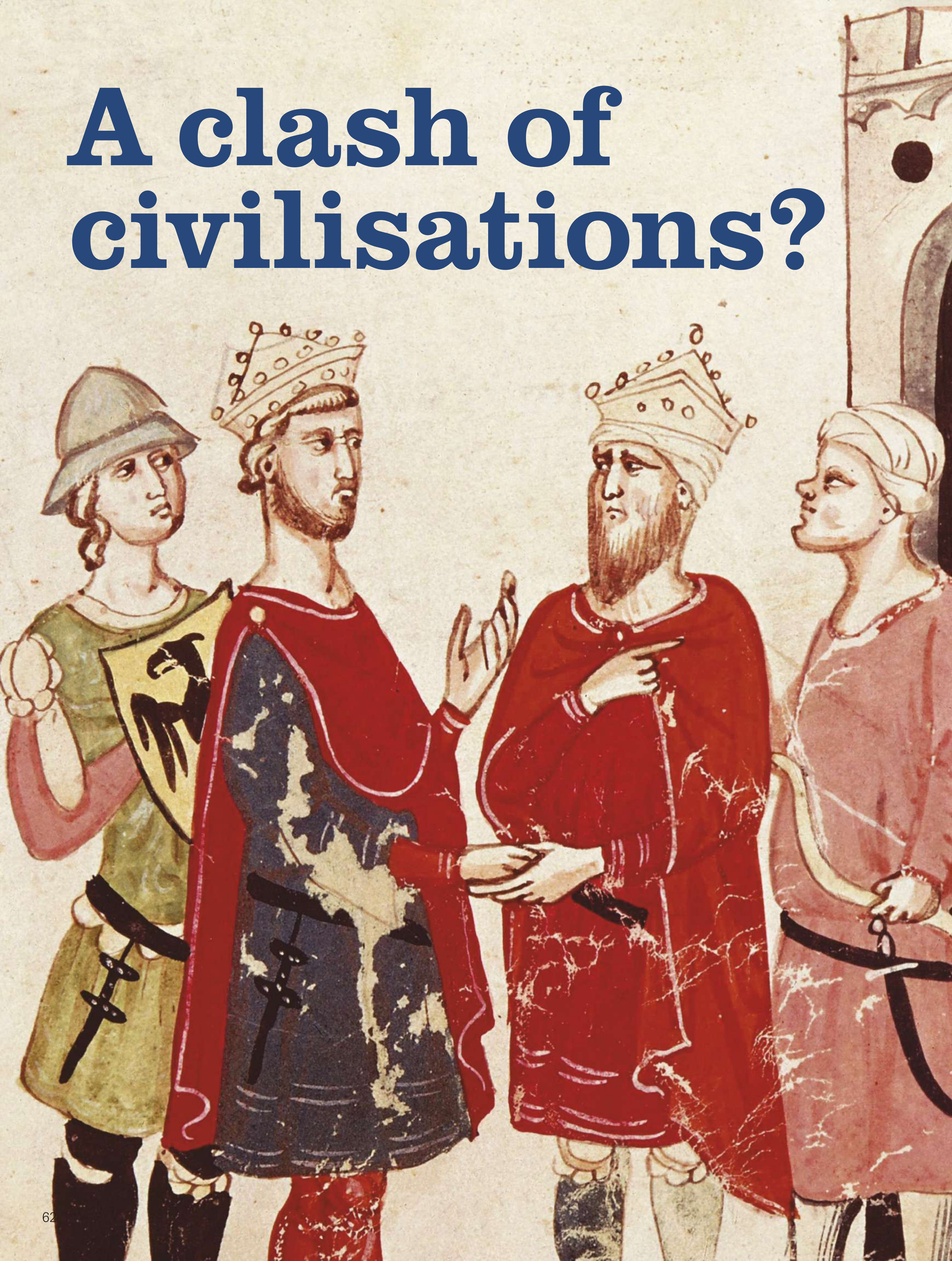
Having never been designed for multiple occupation, the residents of subdivided tenements had no choice but to share water supplies and privies. Such communal facilities were often unavoidably insanitary, a condition made worse by the fact that when the supply of rooms that the poor could afford declined, often as a result of slum clearance schemes, yet more people were packed into houses intended for single families. In 1851, within the infamous Hillgate slum that clung onto the southern banks of the Tyne, Robert Rawlinson encountered one large house in which 71 people lived. Such overcrowding had the inevitable effect of making bad conditions worse.

Over a long enough timeframe, houses, as well as people, are capable of social mobility. They can rise up or fall down the social scale according to the vagaries of fortune. Hundreds of thousands of houses across Britain have histories of decline and decay that in recent times have been perhaps overshadowed by our passion for renovation and gentrification. Most of the worst of the Victorian slums were long ago demolished. Yet many homes that today are highly sought-after have – concealed behind discussions of original features and the salesmanship of estate agents – chapters of their pasts in which they became the refuges of the very poor and anything but desirable residences. H

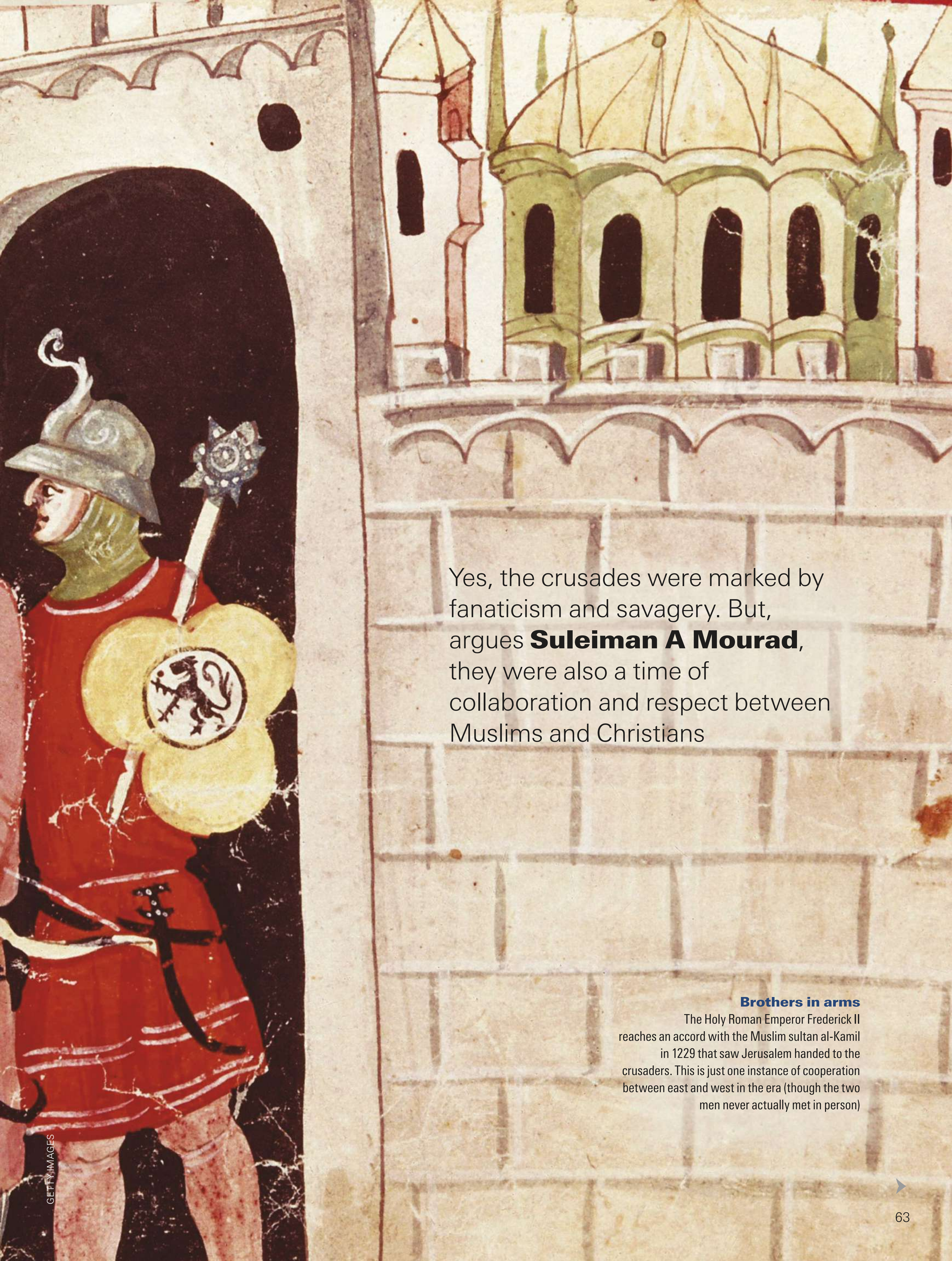
David Olusoga is the presenter of *A House Through Time*, the third series of which is due to air on BBC Two in late May

READ Turn to the June issue of our sister magazine ***BBC History Revealed*** to read an exploration of how houses have changed from the Georgian period through to the 1960s

A clash of civilisations?



Yes, the crusades were marked by fanaticism and savagery. But, argues **Suleiman A Mourad**, they were also a time of collaboration and respect between Muslims and Christians



Brothers in arms
The Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II reaches an accord with the Muslim sultan al-Kamil in 1229 that saw Jerusalem handed to the crusaders. This is just one instance of cooperation between east and west in the era (though the two men never actually met in person)

GETTY IMAGES

Lying in his own blood on the battlefield near Mansoura, his standard covering his grievously wounded body, Emir Fakhr al-Din departed this world on 8 February 1250. He had left his encampment with a handful of guards to assess the army of King Louis IX and devise a plan to defend Egypt from the onslaught of what became known as the Seventh Crusade. But before he could make it back to safety, he was cut down in an ambush. This was a sad ending for someone who only a few months earlier had become the de facto ruler of the Ayyubid sultanate.

Luck as well as talent had destined Fakhr al-Din for greatness. His mother had nursed the future Ayyubid sultan al-Kamil, which strengthened the bond between the two families. So when al-Kamil became sovereign in 1218, Fakhr al-Din was his closest confidant, and never left his side except on important missions.

One of these missions was an embassy to Sicily to negotiate an alliance with Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen. Fakhr al-Din achieved much more than that. In the short time he stayed in Palermo, he profoundly impressed the emperor. The two conversed about science, falconry and poetry (see box on page 66), and before sailing back to Egypt, Frederick held a ceremony to knight his Muslim friend.

The two agendas

The story of Fakhr al-Din sums up the history of Muslim-crusader interactions during the period. There were times for war – a lot of it. There were other times for diplomacy, alliances, friendships, commerce and the exchange of science and knowledge. There were also times when war and peace coincided. This complex legacy of the crusader period in the Middle East is little known. The reason is simple: many modern histories of the crusades have focussed on the violence of the period – and, in doing so, have blurred our ability to see the other side. This was no honest mishap. We have inadvertently allowed modern agendas – one Eurocentric, the other Islamocentric – to determine the way we have reconstructed crusader history.

Indeed, since the 18th century, the Eurocentric and Islamocentric agendas have imposed themselves on the historiography of the crusades. They have shaped its narrative as a clash of civilisations. In the process, all the evidence to the contrary has been silenced or ignored; if acknowledged at all, it has only been seen as inconsequential marginalia.

When crusader history is treated as 'European' history, it becomes easy to think of it as a past extension of modern Europe, tied to the national narratives of modern European countries (Italy, France and Germany, to name a few – none of which existed as such in the Middle Ages). This also tempts scholars and readers to reassess and evaluate the crusades in terms of the values they personally cherish. The Eurocentric agenda led some to imagine the crusaders as predecessors of those later colonialists whose duty was to 'civilise' the world – as in the French scholar Joseph-François Michaud's 1840 *Histoire des Croisades* ('The History of the Crusades'), a book that still exerts tremendous impact in Europe in general, and France in particular. Other Europeans, influenced by the ideals of the Enlightenment or enraptured by oriental romanticism, were critical of the crusades and treated them as an ugly mix of religious fanaticism and savagery – the Europe they wanted condemned. Two examples of this trend are Sir Walter Scott's 1825 novel *The Talisman* and the 1935 movie *The Crusades* by the great American film-maker Cecil B DeMille.

The Eurocentric reading of crusader history also gave medieval European sources a place of dominance in writing the modern narrative of the crusades. As such, non-European medieval sources, which document the experiences of Greek-Byzantines, Armenians, Muslims and Arab-Christians, are read according to the European sources. I do not mean to say that these other sources furnish a more accurate history, but they are indispensable for a proper understanding of the complexity of crusader history, and must be given a central place in the rewriting of the narrative, rather than a secondary role.

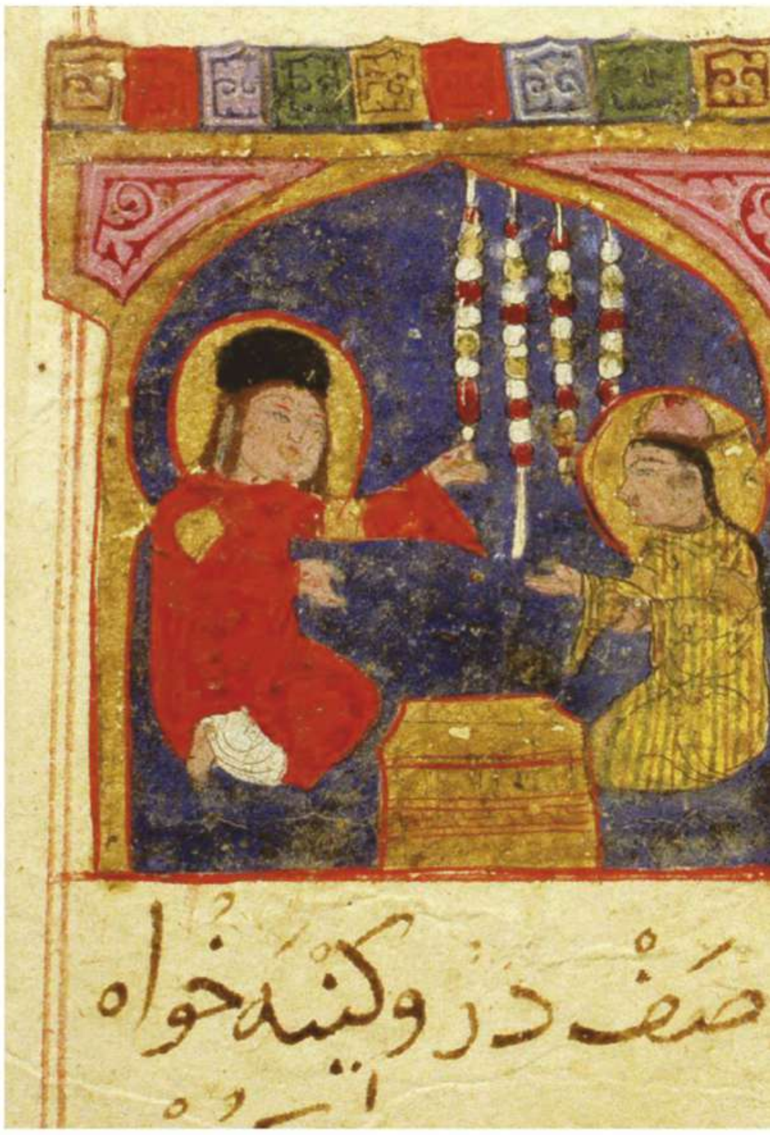
A humiliating fate

Similarly, the Islamocentric reading of crusader history was shaped during the years of colonial subjugation of most Muslim-inhabited lands, starting in the 19th century. Modern Muslim scholars have both imagined and used the crusades as a predecessor of European colonialism; they forewarn of the colonialists' evil schemes and augur that they will assuredly meet the same humiliating fate as their medieval ancestors. A great example of this trend is found in the popular survey *Al-Haraka al-Salibiyya* ('The Crusader Movement') by the Egyptian Said Ashour, which was first published in 1963. These Islamocentric readings selectively employ Arab sources from the period, and champion specific figures – such as Saladin and Baybars – by exaggerating their anti-crusader

We have inadvertently allowed modern agendas to determine the way we have reconstructed crusader history

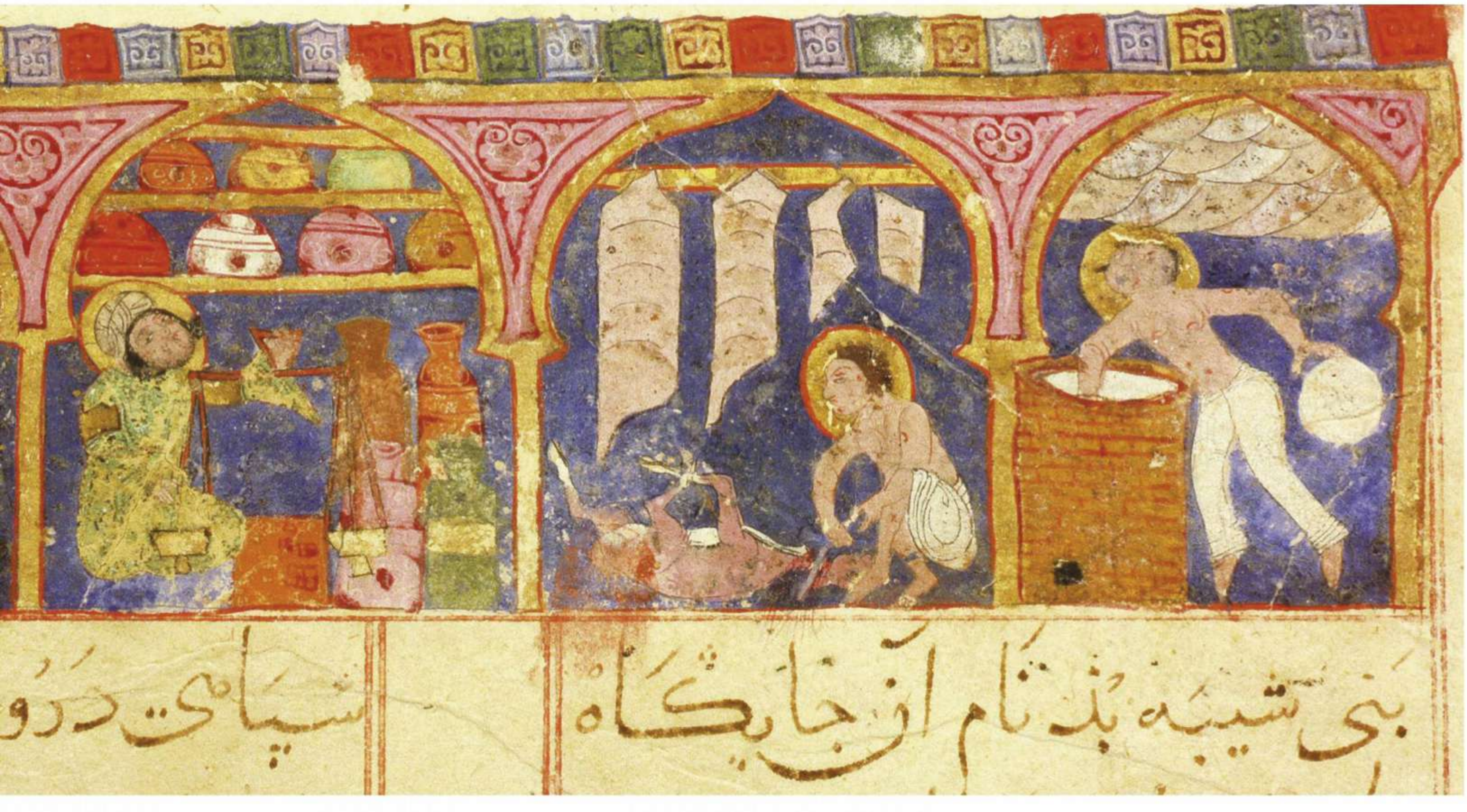
A jeweller, herbalist, butcher and baker in a 13th-century Turkish manuscript. Despite the wars, commerce moved freely between crusaders and Muslims

GETTY IMAGES



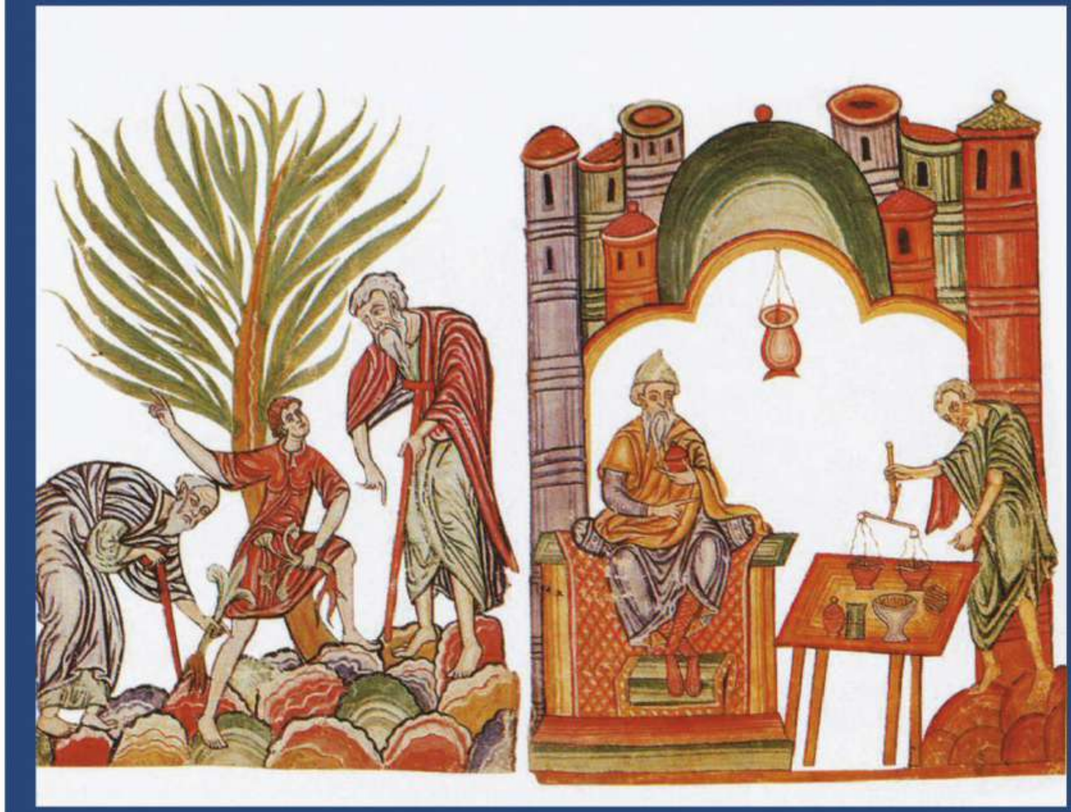
ALAMY

Ian Keith (left) as Saladin and Henry Wilcoxon (centre) as Richard the Lionheart in Cecil B DeMille's 1935 film *The Crusades*, which delivered a damning verdict on Christian Europe's military campaigns in the near east


بنی شیبه بد نام آن جایگاه

INFORMATION EXCHANGE

Muslim-crusader collaboration produced innovations in several different areas



The Islamic world produced the first specially trained pharmacists, and attracted Christian scholars hoping to improve the west's understanding of medicine

MEDICINE

In the 1110s and 1120s, Stephen of Pisa journeyed to Antioch in search of Arabic knowledge, specifically philosophy. His desire for learning the superior sciences of the Muslims led him into other fields, including medicine and astronomy. In Antioch, he led a team, including a Muslim convert to Christianity, to translate various works into Latin for European scholars. It is thanks to the list Stephen composed as a result of his translation of Ali ibn al-Abbas's *The Complete Book on the Craft of Medicine* that many Arabic medical names entered the medieval vocabulary in Europe. Some, such as 'cornea' and 'abdomen', are still in use today.

A c12th-century Fatimid ceramic bowl featuring a mounted falconer. Emperor Frederick II drew on Arabic works when writing his treatise on falconry

FALCONRY

Emperor Frederick II developed such a passion for falconry that he once decided to author a book on the subject. He first asked some scholars in his court to translate for him the authoritative Arabic book on falconry, *Kitab al-Mutawakkili*, attributed to the ninth-century Abbasid caliph al-Mutawakkil, and other Arabic books as well. They showed Frederick how to study falconry as a science, based on observations and tests. Together, they inspired Frederick's *De Arte Venandi cum a Vibus* ('On the Art of Hunting With Birds'), which scholars consider the first 'scientific' study on birds of prey.

accomplishments, and ignoring their friendly interactions with certain groups among the crusaders.

In more recent decades, the Eurocentric reading has been nuanced but never completely challenged, while the Islamocentric reading has not changed at all, thanks to the political situation in the Muslim world.

"Christian pigs and filth"

The crusades was not a clash of civilisations. Only a fool would say that the Muslims and crusaders loved each other, but this does not justify going to the other extreme – for the contemporary sources (especially the Islamic ones) draw a mosaic picture of the period, featuring wars and alliances, boycott and exchange, hatred and amicability and myriad shades in between. In other words, there were never two camps. There were, however, many actors, with different agendas and varying schemes to achieve them.

A window into this complex reality is provided in *The Travels of Ibn Jubayr*. A Muslim secretary from medieval Iberia (Spain), Ibn Jubayr, who died in 1217, sojourned in the eastern Mediterranean and saw things not always palatable to his taste. One observation he made was that, despite occasional wars between the Muslims and crusaders, merchants and commerce continued to move freely between the two realms as if everything was normal. For him, this was a sign of the corruption of rulers on both sides. In one instance, in 1184 he crossed the plain from the Sea of Galilee to Acre, where he discovered countless farming villages inhabited by Muslims who seemed to him to live in complete harmony with the crusaders.

What shocked Ibn Jubayr the most was not only that the crusaders were not harming the Muslims. He bemoaned the fact that these Muslims did not seem bothered by their mingling with – to use his words – "Christian pigs and filth". As such, in Ibn Jubayr's eyes, these Muslims could not have been good Muslims.

The complexity of the crusader period is apparent in the contemporary Muslim sources. For instance, the physician and chronicler Ibn Abi Usaibia (died 1270) recounts the story of an envoy from Emperor Frederick II arriving sometime in the 1220s

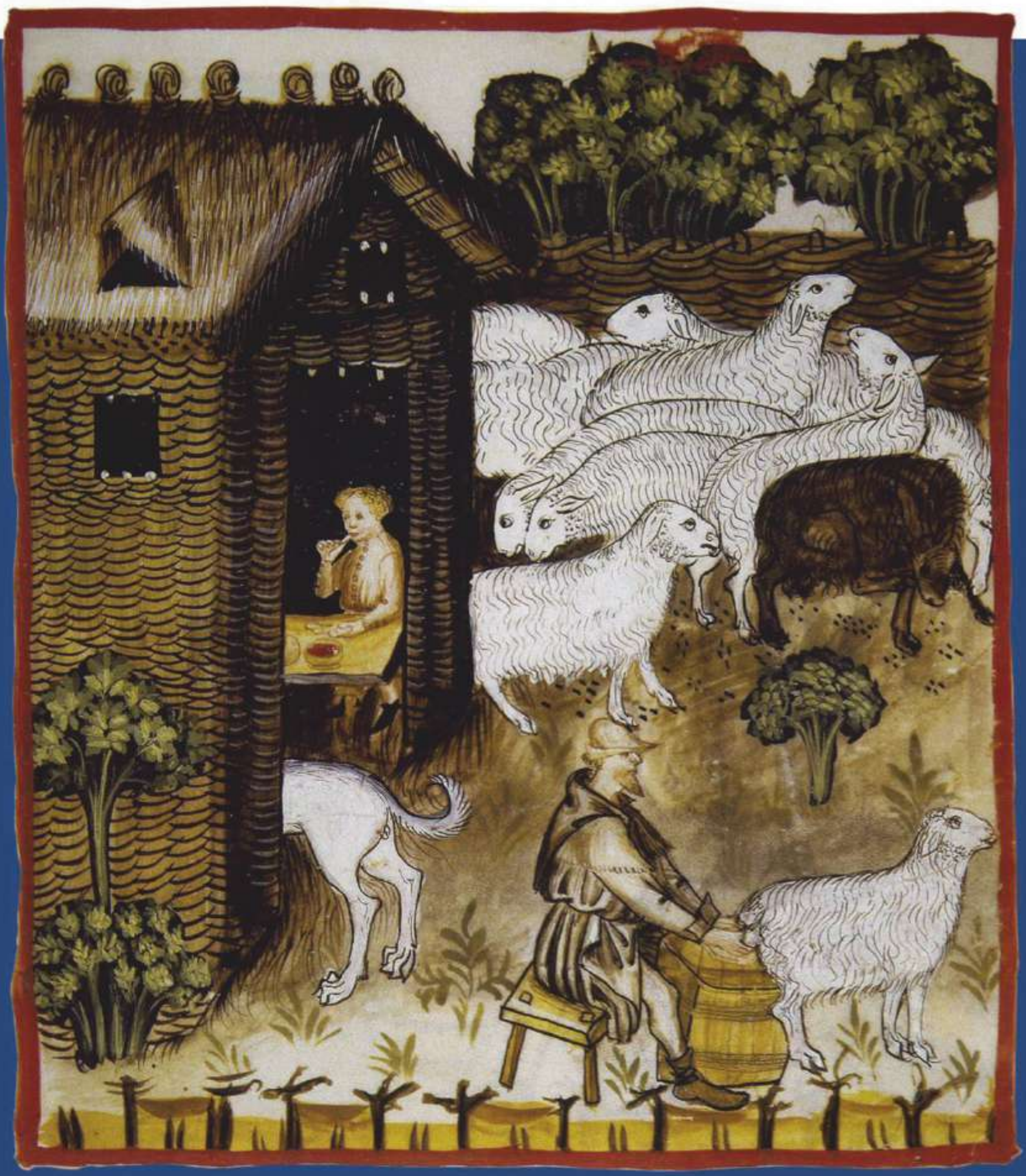
ALAMY/BRIDGEMAN

ARCHITECTURE

When Saladin took control of Egypt and ended the reign of the Fatimids in the 1170s, he constructed his palace on a promontory beneath the Muqattam hills in medieval Cairo, away from the alien Shia and Christian communities. Many of the artisans who worked there were captive crusaders, and employed techniques unknown to the Muslims and others in the Middle East.

Crusader architecture was much stronger and more durable, and allowed for bigger structures than those the locals were used to. The Muslims gradually learned these techniques of building and fortification, often by observing and studying the crusader castles that were spread all over the eastern Mediterranean.

A keystone from the 13th-century Montfort Castle in Israel. Muslims often learned the techniques of fortification by studying crusader strongholds



A flock of sheep pictured in a 14th-century handbook of health. A dispute regarding ovine ownership was the subject of a pioneering lawsuit brought about by Usama Ibn Munqidh

JUSTICE

During one of his many visits to crusader-occupied Acre, Usama Ibn Munqidh, a nobleman who fought many battles against the Christians, brought a case against the Lord of Banias for seizing a flock of sheep belonging to him. Usama presented his grievance there to the King of Jerusalem, who convened a jury of knights to adjudicate the case. After hearing both sides, the jury retreated to a room to deliberate, and came back to deliver a verdict in favour of Usama. The king had no choice but to accept their verdict. This was how the Muslims came to know about jury justice.

at the court of the Muslim ruler of Mosul bearing a list of questions on astronomy for a specific scholar, Kamal al-Din Ibn Yunus. The emperor knew from his court philosopher, Theodore of Antioch, that only Ibn Yunus could solve them. Ibn Yunus obliged and provided the answers to the envoy, who carried them back to Sicily. On a different occasion, another envoy was sent to Cairo to seek answers for mathematical problems, and Sultan al-Kamil instructed his court's mathematicians to write down their solution and send them back to Frederick.

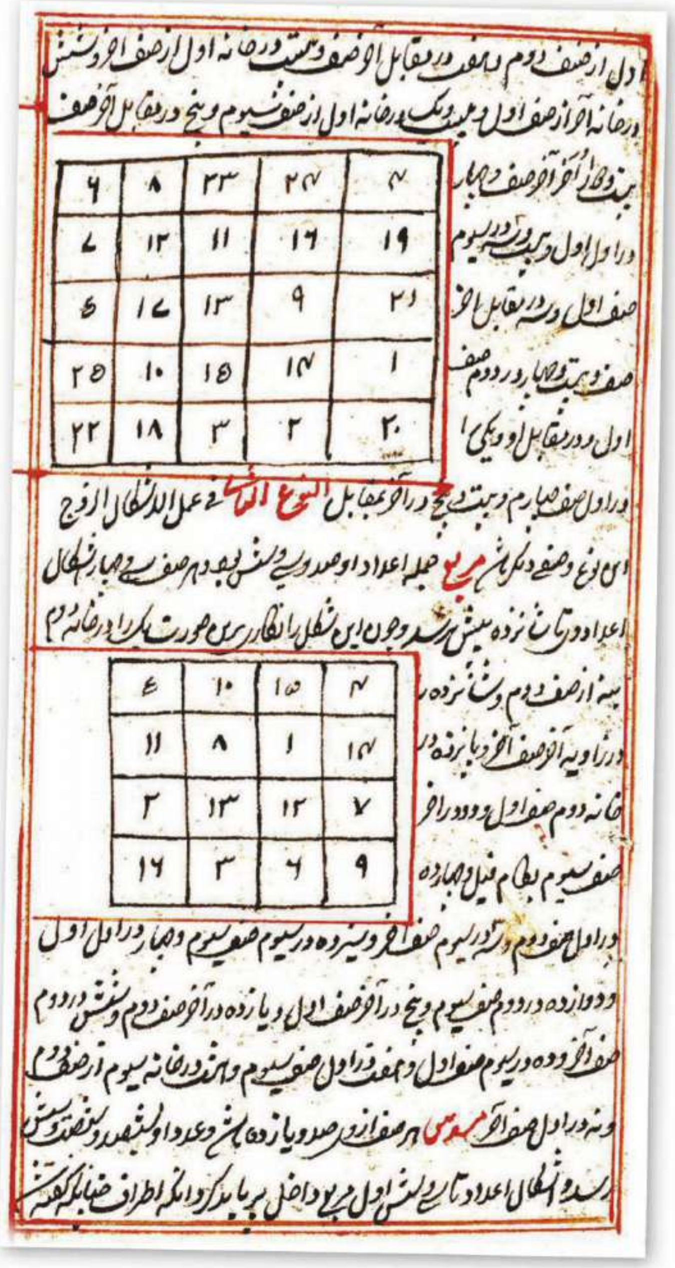
Courts and embassies

The scholarly cooperation between Frederick II and the Ayyubids was sustained for several years. Al-Kamil's son, Sultan al-Salih Ayyub, delegated the logician and jurist Siraj al-Din al-Urmawi to the court of Frederick in Palermo, and while there al-Urmawi authored a book on logic for the emperor. A few years after that, in 1261, the jurist and logician Ibn Wasil travelled to Apulia in southern Italy on an embassy from the Mamluk sultan Baybars to Frederick's son King Manfred. He stayed for two years in Manfred's court in Barletta, and like al-Urmawi before him, Ibn Wasil wrote a book on logic that he dedicated to his host, which he titled *The Imperial Treatise*.

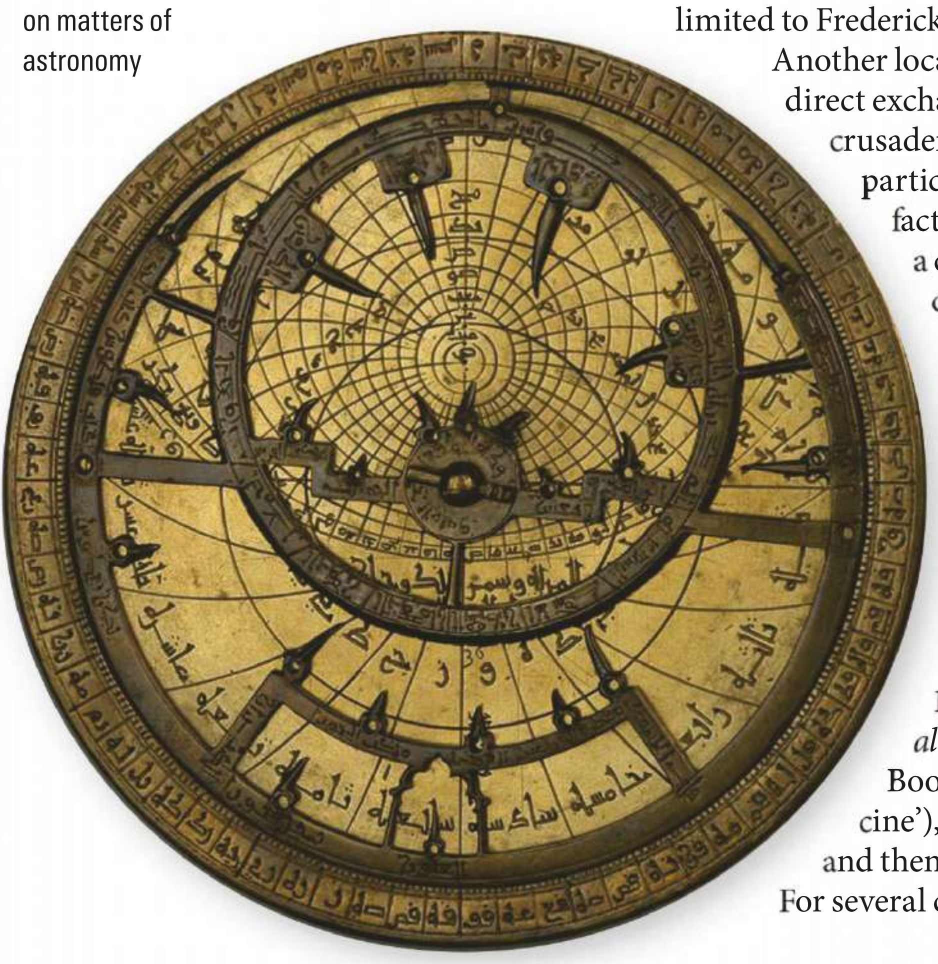
There is also the example of the scholar al-Harawi, who, almost a century before, took up residency in Jerusalem for several weeks in 1173, during which time he

The Islamic sources draw a mosaic of war and alliance, boycott and trade, hatred and amicability and myriad shades in between

ALAMY



Charts from a Persian edition of the medieval Arabic work *The Wonders of Creation*. Muslim scholars refined older scientific ideas



An Islamic astrolabe from Zaragoza, dated to c1079. Muslim experts were consulted by their Christian peers on matters of astronomy

frequently visited and prayed in the Islamic shrine known as the Dome of the Rock. The crusaders had transformed the building into a church, which they called 'Templum Domini', or the Temple of the Lord. Al-Harawi, who was fanatical about alchemy, was a regular feature in the royal court of Jerusalem's King Amalric.

More importantly, in his *A Lonely Wayfarer's Guide to Pilgrimage*, al-Harawi criticised and deconstructed many of the popular customs of making pilgrimage to particular shrines and religious sanctuaries in Palestine and the surrounding regions as reflective of popular Muslim superstitions and false associations. Yet his observations attest to numerous cases of Muslims, Christians and Jews converging on the same spots to worship. Some of these locations were under crusader rule; others were under Muslim rule.

It must be made clear that what I am talking about here is not a *convivencia* – the disputed 'golden age' of tolerance that supposedly existed between faith groups in medieval Andalusia – but instead a complex web of interactions between crusaders and Muslims that cannot and must not be reduced to one thing only: violence.

Avenues of knowledge

In the history of the transmission of knowledge between the Islamic civilisation, which featured a burgeoning scientific culture, and medieval Europe, two main avenues have been identified. One was through medieval Spain, which has received most of the modern scholarly attention. The other is via the Byzantine empire. There is also Sicily, but attention to this possibility has largely been limited to Frederick's reign in the 1200s.

Another location that witnessed the direct exchange of knowledge was crusader Antioch. Pisans, in particular, benefited from the fact that they had developed a commercial base in the city, picking up a lot of Arabic scientific books which they brought home and translated into Latin.

It was in Antioch in the 1120s that Stephen of Pisa (see box, p66) came across Ali ibn al-Abbas al-Majusi's 10th-century *Kitab al-Malaki* ('The Complete Book on the Craft of Medicine'), translated it into Latin and then brought it home to Italy. For several centuries, the book became a must-read on the practice and theory of the medical profession. Also, more complete manuscripts of Ptolemy's *Almagest*, the infamous mathematical-astronomical masterpiece, were brought from Antioch and retranslated into Latin, infusing new energy into both areas of study.

The period was, for some, an opportunity to kill, loot and amass riches and fame. For others, it was a time for alliance and exchange

The mightiest battle

During the winter of 2016, the Al Jazeera network aired the first episode of its documentary on the crusades, which featured a lineup of notable scholars. The narrator opened the episode with these words: "In the history of conflict between east and west, the mightiest battle between Christianity and Islam. A holy war in the name of religion. For the first time: the story of the crusades from an Arab perspective."

It is clear that this new, 'first time' story is the same old yarn about violence that has been told and retold since the 18th century. But medieval sources, especially the Muslim chronicles, tell us a different story. Many people today will refuse to listen to it, however, because the one that feeds the clash of civilisation discourse is more captivating, more exploitable.

The period was, for some, an opportunity to kill, loot and amass riches and fame. Others saw it as an occasion for commerce, alliances or the exchange of knowledge. There were some who pursued both. This is crusader history as it was, and it is this complexity that we as historians ought to present. We might not be able to free ourselves of our biases, but we should at least be beholden to the intricacy of history. H

Suleiman A Mourad is professor of religion at Smith College, Massachusetts. His books include *The Mosaic of Islam* (Verso, 2016)

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN

BOOKS

VIKINGS

"The 'battles and bling' approach of Viking studies is overturned to consider the lives of women"

Judith Jesch reviews *Valkyrie: The Women of the Viking World* › page 74

NAVAL HISTORY

"In an age when few working-class men travelled outside their home county, sailors traversed the globe"

Andrew Lambert reviews Stephen Taylor's *Sons of the Waves: The Common Seaman in the Heroic Age of Sail* › page 76

FICTION

"Historical novelists are the gatekeepers of history. We have an obligation to get things right"

Harry Sidebottom on his new thriller set in ancient Rome, *The Return* › page 77

INTERVIEW

"The breadwinner ideal was a fragile model for family life. It left women and children vulnerable"

Emma Griffin discusses her new book, *Bread Winner* › page 70

SCOTLAND

"Some radicals were transported to Botany Bay, others imprisoned or executed"

Bill Knox reviews Kenny MacAskill's *Radical Scotland* › page 77

GETTY IMAGES

"Looking at family life reveals a dark side to Victorian economic progress"

EMMA GRIFFIN speaks to Ellie Cawthorne about her new book examining the unexpected ways in which economics played out within the working-class homes of Victorian Britain

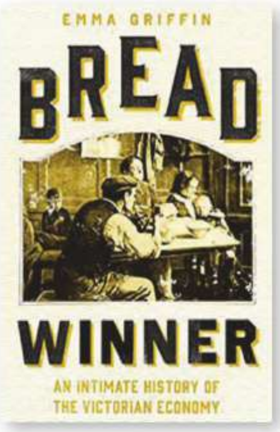
Ellie Cawthorne: Your new book argues that looking at family life and the domestic sphere can offer a different perspective on the broad economic trends of the Victorian era. How so?

Emma Griffin: As historians, we're really comfortable with thinking about the economy just in terms of numbers. And if you do that, the 19th century can look like a big success story. Historians say "Look, real wages went up in the Victorian era. For the first time in history, working people were really getting richer – what good news!"

But I've been trying to offer a different perspective. For a long time, I've been studying working-class autobiographies, in which people describe in great detail what life was like inside their family. More than 600 of these autobiographies, ranging from the early 19th century to the Edwardian period, make up the basis of my book. What I found from reading them is that while wages *did* rise, in reality there could be a big gulf between what a man earned and the wealth as it was felt by the other members of the family.

What we must understand about Victorian family life is that it was dominated by the so-called 'breadwinner' ideal. How this model is supposed to work is that a man goes to work, brings back his wages, and gives them all to his wife. She then spends them on rent, clothing and food for the family, and everybody lives a comfortable life.

It doesn't take a genius to figure out, however, that some men did not give over all of their wages to their wives. When this happened, a much more complicated story unfolded, in which what families *ought* to have had didn't necessarily match up with what women and children actually did have. While it's important to emphasise that not every family broke down, we need to acknowledge that there was a dark side to Victorian economic progress, as families struggled to adapt to this newly industrialised world of higher wages.



Bread Winner: An Intimate History of the Victorian Economy
by Emma Griffin
(Yale, 320 pages, £20)

Why were families not feeling the benefit of those higher wages for men?

In the pre-industrial era, when wages were really low, men didn't have any choice but to give all of their wages to their wife, because they were dependent on her to cook their meals and to keep their home. In a quiet, rural area, there was no cafe you could go to. You couldn't even get a loaf of bread, never mind a cup of tea or a hot cooked meal. You could only get these really basic things if your wife made everything for you from scratch. That meant that there was actually some form of equality between a man's paid wage and a woman's domestic work. But when men started to earn more and more, that began to break down. Now a man didn't need to share all of his money with his wife. He had the means to buy things that she provided, such as cooked meals, and so he was no longer dependent on her in the same way.

There's also an intriguing connection between industrialisation and increased rates of men deserting their families. Desertion rates were roughly equal to death rates in some urban areas. In a small rural face-to-face community, where everybody knows everybody else's business, it was really difficult for a man to desert – you would essentially have to vanish in the night. But in industrialised and urban areas, it was much easier for men to slip away and live a different life.

So this 'breadwinner' model of family life left more women and children vulnerable to poverty?

Yes, I think that's right. While in some cases the breadwinner ideal could work really well, it was a fragile model for family life when rolled out across the board. Relying on a single wage is fine as long as there's a reliable father figure who can provide for the family. But if not, then really intractable problems begin to emerge.

The simplest issue was that men could die – particularly in this period, when men's work was often dangerous and the death rate was high. It was a risk for any family that they might suddenly tumble right to the bottom of the social pile because their breadwinner had died. Another fragility of the system was its dependency on a man doing what society told him he ought to. That's simply not realistic: human nature just doesn't work like that. Obviously some men did share their wages, but others would not work regularly or start keeping money back to spend on their own hobbies and pleasures. And women had no recourse – there was nothing they could do to try and get that wage out of their husband except shout and scream at him, which was not necessarily effective.

All of that was compounded by the fact that families were expected to look after themselves; there was no other support system to turn to. If you were truly destitute you could resort to the workhouse, but there was nothing remotely like the welfare state of the 20th century. I think the fact that the state wouldn't step in was why there was such brutal poverty in this period. While families could provide an important safety net, they couldn't offer reliable final support for everybody, leaving many women and children unprovided for.

For the families that were thrust into poverty in this era, what did that poverty look like?

It looked quite different as the Victorian period progressed. In the early 19th century, poverty really meant not having enough food

PROFILE

Emma Griffin is professor of modern British history at the University of East Anglia. Her previous books include *Liberty's Dawn: A People's History of the Industrial Revolution* and *Blood Sport: Hunting in Britain Since 1066* (both Yale). Emma has written and presented several BBC Radio 4 documentaries, and acted as historical advisor for the Channel 4 drama *The Mill*

PHOTOGRAPH BY
FRAN MONKS

to eat. Some of the autobiographers I studied were hungry throughout their childhood. Particularly if there was a bad harvest, families could be plunged into grinding poverty, lacking the very basic essentials.

By the Edwardian period, poverty was not so desperate or acute. Although the government hadn't stepped in, lots of charities – Barnardos, the Salvation Army, local church associations – were now helping out. Being poor was not quite such a brutalising experience as it once had been. What you saw instead was poverty within plenty: on the one hand, Edwardian society was relatively affluent with lots of money floating around. But on the other, there were children running around with no shoes to wear.

> "The gender pay gap in Victorian Britain was considerable. In any kind of industry that employed both men and women, women generally earned about half of what men did"

As well as male breadwinners, this family model was dependent on female homemakers. How significant was domestic labour?
I think the best way to understand it is just to imagine that your house doesn't have electricity, and very likely no running water either. That means that everything requires so much more work. You've got to go and fetch the water, and light the fires from scratch every time you want to heat any food or have a hot drink. You're perpetually getting fuel, clearing away dirty fires, fetching water and firewood. There's no refrigeration, so food has to be bought on a daily basis –and that food will arrive in a really dirty state, not as the clean packaged goods we're used to today. That's not to mention childcare and other tasks. Everything required so much more labour than it would today, and all of that work fell to the woman of the house.

Did women have any opportunities for paid work?
The options were fairly dismal. Many of the female autobiographers that I studied needed to work, because their families didn't have a male breadwinner. Maybe he had died, or was drinking, but they weren't getting the wage so the mother needed to work.

But there weren't many choices available and they tended to be very badly paid. In London, women could take on 'sweated labour', making boxes or packing goods in factories. Outside that, you could do a bit of cleaning, or if you were lucky you might find work in a shop or a laundry. Around Lancashire, where large factories were emerging, women could find relatively well-paid work. Nevertheless, employers would put men and women on different machines, call the machines that men worked on 'skilled', and pay them a lot more.

The gender pay gap in Victorian Britain was considerable. In any kind of industry that employed both men and women, women generally earned about half of what men did. And it's important to remember that if women can't earn as much as men, they're never going to have as much power.

Is it possible to untangle whether most women stayed at the home because of low wages, or whether wages were low *because* women were expected to stay at home?
It's a bit of a chicken and egg situation, so it's hard to say. I think we've always assumed that so many *chose* to stay at home because women's wages were low. But I would argue that they didn't really have very much choice, because they weren't able to earn enough to be independent.

If society's ideal is to have women staying at home, preparing meals and looking after children, then there's no point having well-paid work for women out there. Because evidence shows that if decent waged work was available, women would take it – that's what happened in factory districts.

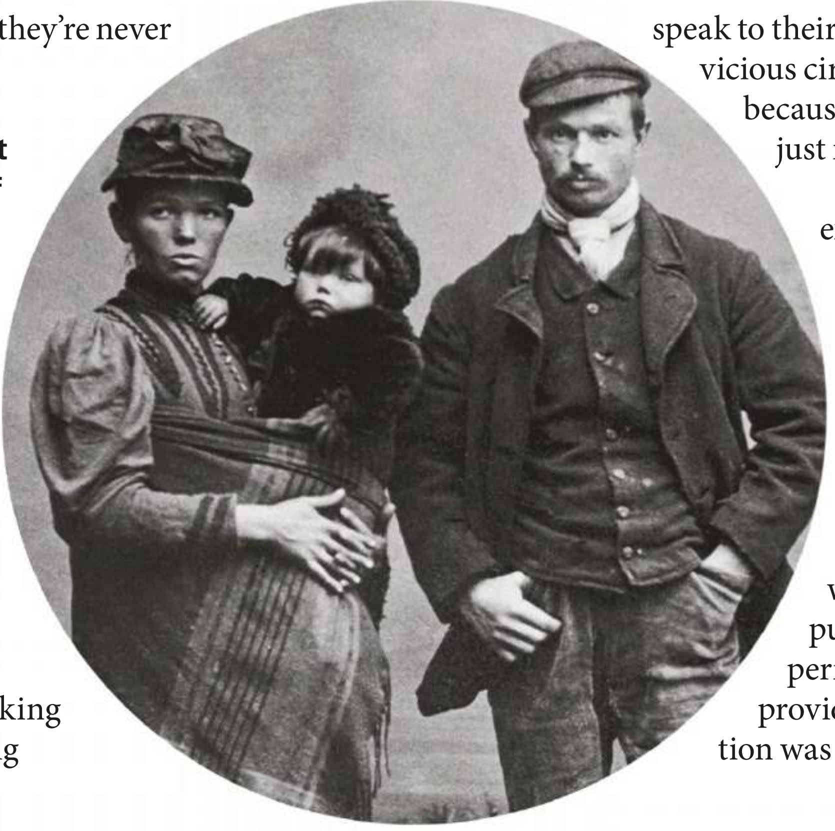
So while we can't really say exactly why women's wages came to be so low, I think it's right to be cynical and questioning. It's certainly the case that keeping women's wages down was a really good way of making sure that houses had the women that they needed.

Were there any other obstacles to women taking on paid work?
A major hurdle was childcare. There was no formalised system, so every woman had to scrabble around to figure out her own solution. Some factory districts had some form of childminding services available, but anywhere else, there really was nothing. You were dependent on finding a family member or neighbour willing to look after your child. As women were paid really low wages, they weren't able to pay much for childcare – so, obviously, the standard of care that your children would receive was really low. Mothers with small children who wanted to work were faced with some really difficult options. It's quite depressing to look at.

As well as the pressures placed on women by the single-earner system, what kind of pressures did it place on men?
On the surface, it may seem like men were the ones benefiting from this system. But when you scrape away at men's stories, you realise that it was actually a very difficult set-up for them as well.

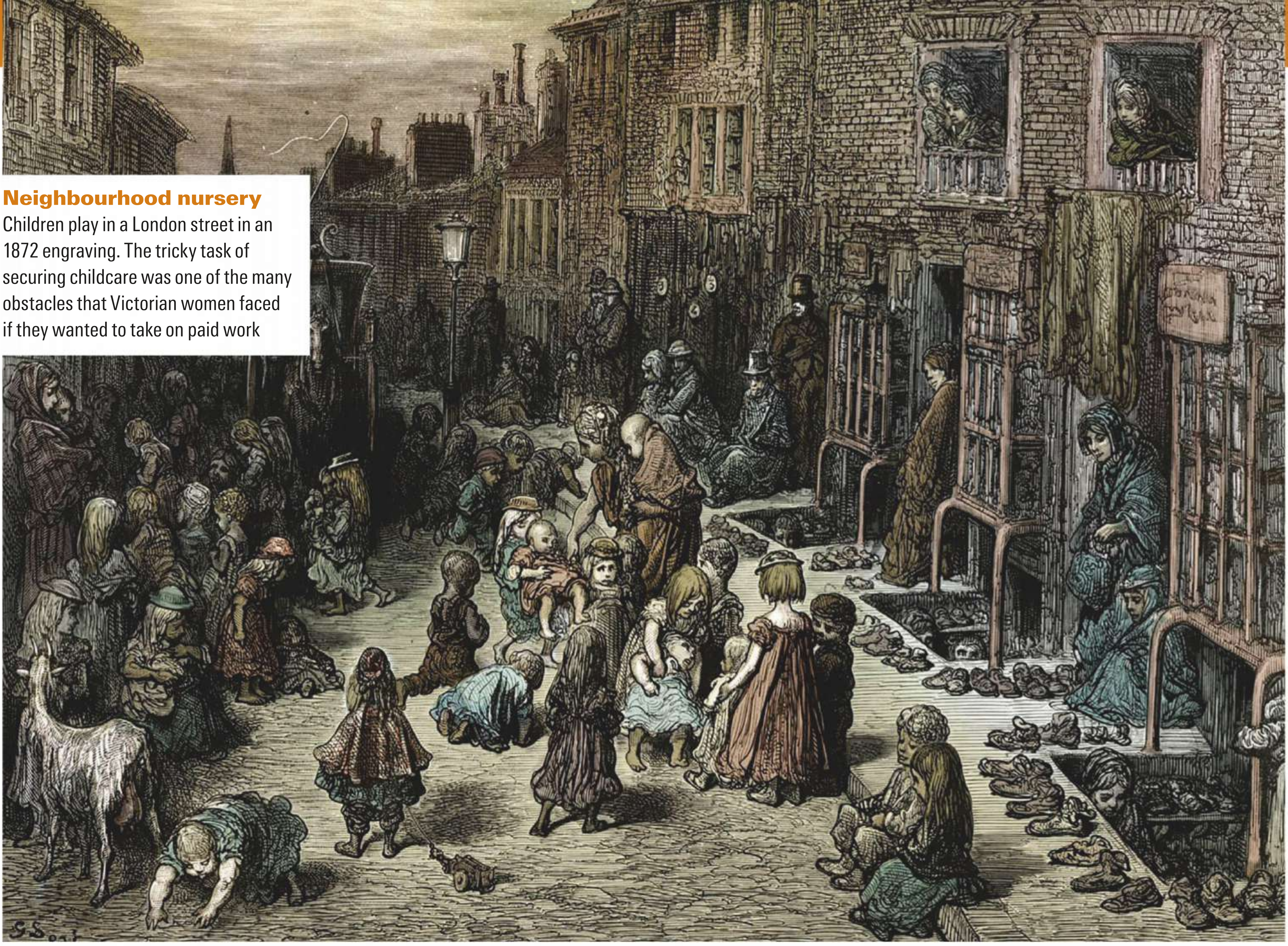
A working man could be out of the house for 50 or 60 hours a week, so a lot of children saw their fathers as distant, remote figures. And because the home was so powerfully coded as a space for women and children, fathers often felt out of place there. Many autobiographers wrote about how their fathers didn't seem to belong in the home, and didn't know how to speak to their children. This often ended up in a vicious circle where a father would start drinking because he felt rejected by the family, but that just made his children hate him even more.

A lot of working-class men were also expected to hold down difficult and draining jobs – heavy labour with long hours. Many jobs like mining were dangerous, and even scary. Several men reported turning to drink because it gave them courage, and alcohol was a very significant problem in the Victorian era. It was cheaper to get a mug of alcohol than a cup of clean water, and lax licensing laws meant that pubs were everywhere. Workplaces often permitted people to bring drinks in, or even provided alcohol for working men, so temptation was rife.



Hard times
A working-class family pose for a portrait in c1880. Many in the Victorian era struggled to stave off poverty and hardship

GETTY IMAGES



Neighbourhood nursery

Children play in a London street in an 1872 engraving. The tricky task of securing childcare was one of the many obstacles that Victorian women faced if they wanted to take on paid work

On the flip side, how important was work in shaping masculine identities in this period?

Work and masculinity were closely interlinked. Autobiographies show that a family found it very difficult to respect a man if he wasn't bringing in any money. Earning money provided men with their status, first and foremost within the family. Young boys started off like girls – unimportant people in the family. They were the last people to be fed, didn't get good-quality meat, and wore hand-me-downs.

But at some point, boys headed out to work. Autobiographers often described as pivotal the moment at which they started to earn more than they needed for their own keep. New opportunities opened up, such as joining political parties or clubs, wearing clothes that they chose themselves, or enjoying leisure time – they could start to form their own identities. The workplace also offered new opportunities for male friendship, as young men formed bonds with their peers.

It's clear from your research that economics shaped family relationships. What was the emotional impact of all of this?

We like to idealise the working-class poor and how they look after their own – this dreamy image of people banding together to take care of themselves collectively. And while that's true to a certain extent, there's no denying that acute poverty doesn't bring out the best in people. Much more often, they're overwhelmed and can't provide adequate emotional support for their children. At the core of many of the autobiographies I looked at was the fact that poverty puts a lot of strain on family relationships. If a mother and her children are over-worked and under-nourished, it can be very difficult to create a happy home. So it certainly wasn't all milk and honey for these families, particularly when money became really scarce.

Were there any winners in this breadwinner system?

I think my evidence from Victorian Britain suggests that paying a large wage to men and then just hoping for the best really doesn't work for anyone involved. It's very easy for it to start sounding as though this system worked to men's advantage and allowed them to be utterly exploitative. But I don't think it was an unmitigated blessing for men either: it put a lot of pressure on their physical, mental and emotional health.

But having said that, it was clearly worse to be the wife in this set-up. Women definitely found themselves as the weaker half of the partnership, because they were stripped of any kind of economic power. If you were trapped in an unsuccessful or abusive relationship you could never get away, because you would have no money to fund a departure. Not having enough money to feed yourself and your children meant that you were utterly disempowered.

How does all of this change our understanding of economic trends of the Victorian era?

My research feeds into the field of feminist economics, which argues that we need to challenge assumptions about the way economies actually operate. Often these assumptions are unrealistic, because they don't capture female experience. We need to start thinking about what counts as 'work' in a different way, and get rid of the idea that paid work is the only labour that counts, because that just privileges men's work.

When it comes to the Victorian era in particular, historians and economists need to take the impact of women's domestic work into account – because if a woman wasn't doing those tasks, somebody else would have to be paid to do them. Throughout the 19th century, society wouldn't have been able to function without women contributing their domestic labour. What's clear is that we have to start looking at economic history in a way that understands and values women's contributions. H

WATCH

For more on Victorian Britain, watch *Monkman & Seagull's Genius Adventures*, which airs this month on BBC Two

GETTY IMAGES

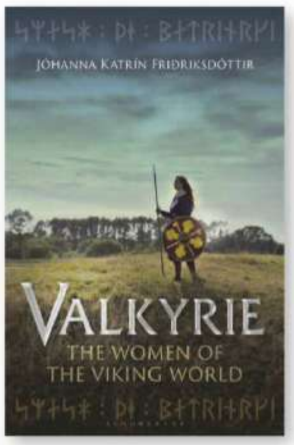
Equine equality
A stone relief shows a Valkyrie offering a drinking horn to the god Óðinn on horseback. A new book, named after the female mythological figures, reveals that women, too, were skilled equestrians in the Viking Age

AKG IMAGES

VIKINGS

It's a woman's world

JUDITH JESCH recommends a new book that overturns the 'battles and bling' of Viking studies to place women's lives and experiences at the heart of the story



Valkyrie: The Women of the Viking World
by Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir
Bloomsbury, 280 pages, £20

In a world turned upside down by Covid-19, we have retreated into our homes, taking sanitising measures and wondering what the future holds. An intriguing historical parallel for our current situation can be found in medieval Icelandic sagas, which show how infectious disease affected the households of Iceland and Greenland in the late Viking Age, when they became Christian a millennium ago.

In *Eyrbyggja saga*, the arrival in Iceland of a boatload of people from Ireland, the Hebrides and Norway is followed by illness and death. The first to die, a vigorous Hebridean woman called Þorgunna, instructs that her bedding should be burned after she dies. Her command is ignored, leading to further deaths. The theme comes up again in the story of Guðríðr, which appears in both *Grœnlendinga saga* and *Eiríks saga rauða*. Recently arrived in Greenland from Iceland, Guðríðr marries the son of Eirik the Red. Infectious disease arrives at the remote farm they share with another couple, carrying off a large number of people. Eerie happenings occur as the dead begin to haunt the living.

Both of these stories are used to emphasise the importance of Christian precepts, especially regarding burial. Interestingly, in a genre that is normally preoccupied with the outward-facing doings of men, the episodes foreground female characters and the domestic sphere. The arrival of disease brings a more inward focus, where the mistress of the household had full authority.

In *Valkyrie*, Jóhanna Katrín Friðriksdóttir, an Icelandic scholar based in Oslo, overturns the 'battles and bling' school of Viking studies to consider in detail the lives of girls and women. Her title refers to the mythological 'Valkyries', or 'choosers of the slain', who work with the supreme god Óðinn to choose which warriors will die in battle and ascend to Valhalla.

The book begins with an arresting account of a poem envisaging the Valkyries deciding who lives and dies at the battle of Clontarf, in Ireland in 1014. But this negative idea of the fateful agency of women is not allowed to dominate the book. Instead, the author explores the full range of female conditions and actions, in a "society in which women's contributions, work and wisdom were essential". Starting with infancy and childhood and ending, inevitably, with old age and death, the author traces many aspects of women's lives, both good and ill, extracted from a wide range of source material.

As a literary scholar, Friðriksdóttir structures her narrative around anecdotes from the Icelandic sagas as well as traditional poetry also recorded in medieval Iceland. Despite the fact that these texts were written several hundred years after the Viking Age, the author does not shrink from using them as the backbone of her narrative. She is cautious about their literal value as sources for the Viking era, but argues convincingly for their relevance as evidence for social attitudes and thought patterns. The scholar's job is to "recognise which elements... are recurring literary tropes, and carefully sort out what might reflect a distant reality".

Moreover, the author has done her homework and constantly backs up the literary texts with what many might consider the more reliable evidence offered by epigraphy – the study of ancient inscriptions – archaeology, and contemporary documents from other cultures. She is *au fait* with the latest research on genetics and isotope analysis, as well as recent archaeological finds and interpretations.

In this way, Friðriksdóttir weaves a complex picture in which different kinds of evidence successfully illuminate each other to provide a rich and detailed picture of the women who not only gave birth to, married, and kept house for male Vikings, but also partnered them in agriculture, trade and exploration. Women's importance in the Viking Age is symbolised by their key role in textile production, including the making of sails for the famous ships as well as clothing, described here in fascinating detail.

One of the book's highlights is the teenage Swedish princess Ástríðr, riding over to Norway on horseback to persuade King (later Saint) Óláfr to marry her. Other evidence suggests that women were accomplished and frequent equestrians. Ástríðr reappears later in the book making a political intervention on behalf of her young stepson, using her Swedish connections to support his claim to the Norwegian throne after his father's martyrdom. While many of the female literary figures discussed here are well-known to those familiar with Old Norse literature, some are lesser-known.

A good example of how the sagas can reveal real attitudes, even when not entirely realistic, is the story of Gríma in *Fóstbrœðra saga*. She is a widow with a teenage daughter who is being sexually harassed by one of the saga's 'heroes'. Unable to dissuade the predator, Gríma resorts to magic, hypnotising her servant to attack and wound him. The servant gets away safely and the predator is humiliated and scarred for life. In telling this story, the saga encourages its audience to empathise with unprotected women who struggle to deal with predatory men.

> **"Women not only gave birth to, married and kept house for male Vikings, but also partnered them in agriculture, trade and exploration"**

Even more extraordinary is a demonstration of male empathy in *Flóamanna saga*. On the murder of his wife, a man feeds his infant son by cutting his own nipple, out of which milk flows. He declares that "he now understands why mothers love the children they have breastfed more than anyone else".

As far as Viking studies are concerned, this book is very much of the moment. The author tackles the topical thorny question of female warriors (she is sceptical), emphasises the Viking Age's diversity, and recognises the importance of intersectionality, in particular how social status enabled certain women to exert a measure of independent thought and action and to express their ideas and feelings.

Friðriksdóttir's book should appeal to a wide audience. Her references to popular culture and contemporary mores provide points of reference for those who need them, without overwhelming the argument. All in all, this book is intelligent, engaging and well written, with many new insights.

Judith Jesch is professor of Viking studies at the University of Nottingham

ALAMY

AUTHORS ON THE PODCAST

Philippe Sands on the life of a senior Nazi

"These people from the Nazi era are often portrayed one dimensionally as monsters. They are not. As a high-ranking Nazi official, Otto Wächter did monstrous things that were in my view criminal, but he wasn't only a man who did monstrous things. He was also a husband, a father, a lover, someone who loved culture, a family man, an everyday human being."

Valerie Hansen on the roots of globalisation

"If you focus your gaze only on the mid-Atlantic, you will of course say that the expeditions of Columbus, da Gama and Magellan marked the beginning of Europe's contact with other parts of the world. But if you look globally, you'll see that those contacts started much earlier – and that, while something important happened in the 15th century, something very important also happened in the year 1000 that made those changes possible."

Anne de Courcy on Coco Chanel and the Côte d'Azur in the 1930s

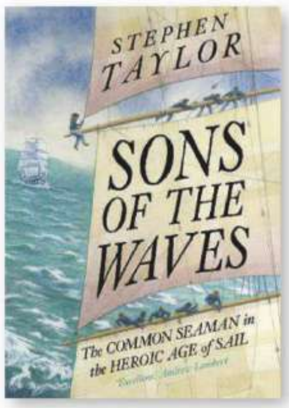
"The Riviera in the 1930s wasn't yet a sea of concrete, it was little fishing villages and lovely restaurants. People who went there in the summer lived in a little bubble, full of the rich who pulled in on the luxurious blue train, a special train that arrived from Paris. And of course, away from home and all restraints, some of their behaviour did get a bit bad."

MORE FROM US Listen to these episodes and more for free at **historyextra.com/podcast**

MARITIME

Life on the high seas

ANDREW LAMBERT is swept along by a deep, detailed account of sailors' experiences on the ocean waves during the 18th and early 19th centuries



Sons of the Waves: The Common Seaman in the Heroic Age of Sail
by Stephen Taylor
Yale, 416 pages, £20

In an age when few working-class men travelled outside their home county, deep-water sailors traversed the globe, encountering new and strange worlds, exotic flora and fauna, and endless opportunities for a 'run ashore' to the local bars, brothels and markets at the end of a voyage.

Most of these men left no written record of their experience, but they generated a rich seam of evidence in muster books, medical journals, punishment records, logbooks and official reports. Individuals can be traced across time and space, and those that did commit their thoughts to paper can be cross-examined, to make sure they really were at the great events of history.

The most literate, or those who found someone willing to help them tell their stories in later life, were more reflective and curious about their world than old stereotypes would suggest. Some could conjure a line of poetry to capture their experiences. They accepted the cruel necessity of naval service in wartime, and found solace in dreams of homes they might never return to.

In *Sons of the Waves*, Stephen Taylor has assembled a rich haul of seafarer's words, linking published texts, archives and new discoveries that illuminate the age of British naval glory, from Lord Anson's circumnavigation in the 1740s to the downfall of Napoleon. Working these words into the wider story of naval history provides a finely drawn context of shipboard life, voyaging, shipwreck, disease and combat.

These were men with unique skills – they could work aloft handling sails in a gale, mend ropes and sails, steer the ship, and perform all the specialist tasks that separated the seafarer from the landlubber, itself a seaman's term of abuse. Sailors were rated and paid on ability, pure and simple. Men unable to work aloft were rated landsmen, and paid less.

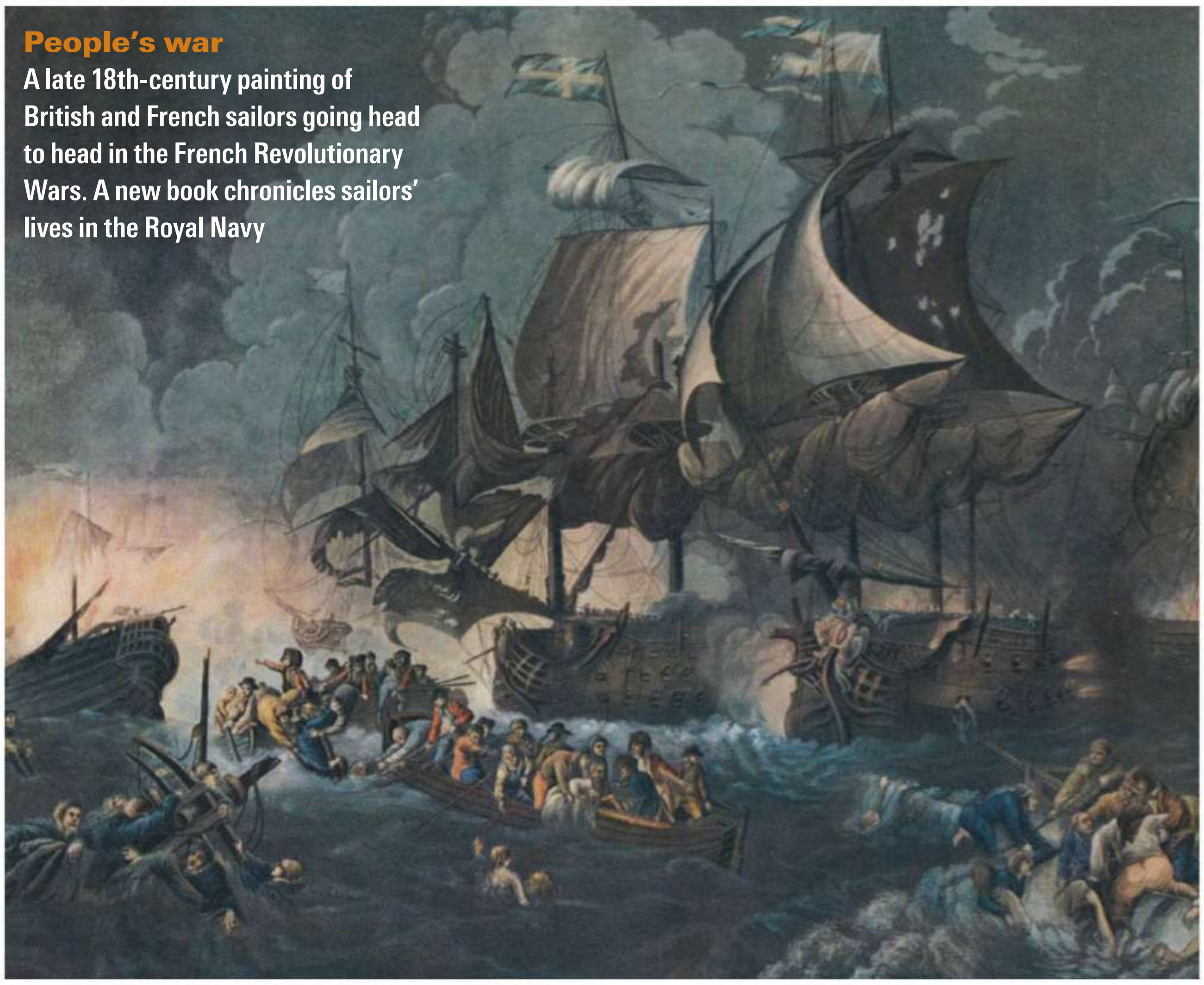
Although many of them served in the Royal Navy during wartime, that was not an exclusive employment. In peacetime, skilled men joined the ships of the East India Company, sailing to China. Others worked on the convict transportation ships that began the colonisation of Australia, manned the slave ships of Atlantic trade, and later the anti-slavery patrols that stamped out the vile business. Sailors were free agents until war broke out, when the monarch had a right to their services. The sailors in British service came from many countries: Americans, former slaves, and skilled men from across Europe and Asia were equally at home in ships where race, religion and even language mattered far less than skill.

> **"In telling their stories, these sailors were more curious, literate and reflective than stereotypes would suggest"**

Many of these men were drawn to the sea by Britain's dynamic maritime culture, in which Crusoe and Blackbeard rubbed shoulders with Drake, and ultimately Nelson, whose coxswain provided an intimate picture of the hero in action and in repose. Every seafarer's experience adds something to the whole, enlarging our understanding of these uncommon Britons.

Taylor's research, skilful exposition, and elegant integration of text, archive and image has produced a compelling account of the men who made modern Britain, one that supplants all those that has gone before. Essential reading for sailors of the open ocean and the armchair. H

Andrew Lambert is professor of naval history at King's College London



People's war
A late 18th-century painting of British and French sailors going head to head in the French Revolutionary Wars. A new book chronicles sailors' lives in the Royal Navy

ALAMY

SCOTLAND

Rights and riots

KENNY MacASKILL
RADICAL SCOTLAND

Radical Scotland: Uncovering Scotland's Radical History from the French Revolutionary Era to the 1820 Rising
by Kenny MacAskill
Biteback, 352 pages, £20

Over the past four years, Kenny MacAskill has written on the Lockerbie bombing, Jimmy Reid and Red Clydeside. However, his latest offering is without doubt superior to those previous examples in terms of research and interpretation.

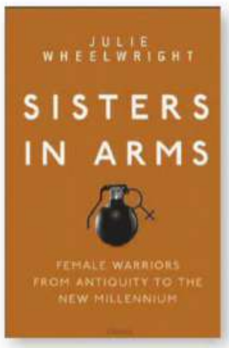
As the title makes clear, the book covers the years of radical struggle from the 1780s up to the Radical War of 1820 (a week of civil unrest that was in reality more of a skirmish than a war). The story is well told, the writing engaging; indeed, it's a historical page-turner. The movement's ups and downs are charted in detail, as are the lives of the leading actors such as radical 18th-century lawyer Thomas Muir. These men and their families suffered a great deal at the hands of a vengeful state; some were transported for long periods to Botany Bay, others imprisoned, and some were executed. It is a story of unflinching courage and determination.

However, MacAskill is a lawyer and politician rather than a historian, and the absence of historical training leads to shortcomings in approach and analysis. Firstly, there is the conspiratorial claim that he is "uncovering" this historical moment after it has been hidden from the public by "the establishment". But this story has in fact been told many times, and the volume adds little to what is already known. Secondly, there is the omission of important works from both the endnotes and the bibliography. For example, the chapter on the King's Birthday Riots, which unfolded in Edinburgh in June 1792, fails to mention the seminal work on this subject by Chris Whatley. As a starting point for examining this period in Scottish political history, *Radical Scotland* is excellent, but it remains no more than that.

Bill Knox is honorary senior lecturer at the University of St Andrews

MILITARY

Female fighters



Sisters in Arms: Female Warriors from Antiquity to the New Millennium
by Julie Wheelwright
Osprey, 320 pages, £18.99

In 1748, Hannah Snell enlisted aboard the *Swallow,* whose mission was to seize the island of Mauritius, disguised as cabin boy 'James Gray'. Possibly to quieten teasing about his effeminacy – especially his 'hairless chin' – James often pursued relationships with other women when the marines reached port. Boasting of his love for one such woman soon provided an acceptable excuse to avoid further visits to harbour brothels.

Snell's extraordinary story, recounted in her memoirs, is just one of many 'passing' women warriors in this fascinating book. With great skill, Julie Wheelwright surveys the presence of women in combat, from the Scythian warriors who inspired the Amazonian myth, to the 'passing' sailors and soldiers of the 18th century, and on to the re-emergence of women as members of the armed forces in the 20th century. In doing so she draws upon a range of sources, especially personal correspondence, journals, diaries and memoirs. As Wheelwright points out, the life histories of these women are often a challenge to interpret, especially since female warriors passing as men were often obliged to document their 'accomplishments' in order to secure a pension.

During the two world wars, many more women enlisted without subterfuge. Russian fighter Maria Bochkareva made global news in 1917 with her 2,000-strong, all-female 'Women's Battalion of Death'. Flora Sandes, an English nurse, joined the Serbian army in the First World War to fight for the British empire and her adopted country.

By the new millennium, women had entered the armed services in unprecedented numbers with a range of stories to tell. Their testimonies, plus those of earlier female warriors discussed in this engaging book, provoke us to think anew about the well-established relationship between masculinity and combat.

June Purvis is emeritus professor in women's and gender history at the University of Portsmouth

FROM FACT TO FICTION

Back from the battlefield

Harry Sidebottom on *The Return,* his fast-paced new thriller set in ancient Calabria

Your novel begins with a veteran Roman soldier returning from the battlefield. What intrigued you about this premise?
The contrast between the respect awarded to courage in war and the dire social and economic conditions to which veterans returned. The army of the Roman Republic was a militia of conscripted peasant farmers. They could serve for up to 16 years, and while they were away at war, their farms often got into debt. Thousands of legionaries returned to find that rich estate owners had forced their families off the land and out of their homes, either by foreclosure or physical intimidation and the threat of violence. In the last two centuries BC, although these peasant-soldiers conquered a Mediterranean empire for Rome, many survivors came home to face eviction and poverty.

Why is there such an appetite for stories set in ancient Rome?
Apart from the broad canvas for exciting stories that ancient Rome offers up, the Romans are, as Mary Beard would say, "good to think with". In many ways they seem much like us (monogamous, with a respect for political freedom, and a sense of duty), but in others (slavery, gladiatorial combat, and their attitudes to women and foreigners) utterly alien. This tension is endlessly fascinating. Thinking about the Romans makes us reflect on ourselves.

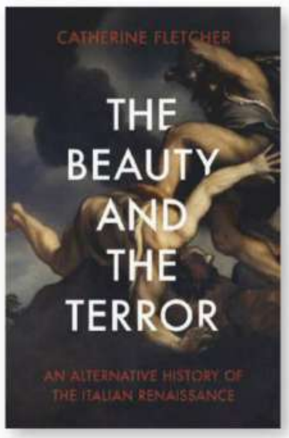
How important is historical accuracy to your fiction writing?
Historical novelists are the gatekeepers of history. We have an obligation to get things right. Most writers who set their fiction in the past research the externals (things like food, clothes, arms and armour). But as well as that, in my novels I also try to explore the attitudes and values of the ancient Romans. We do the past, and ourselves, a disservice if we make everyone in history just like us.

The Return
by Harry Sidebottom
(Zaffre, 320 pages, £12.99)

RENAISSANCE

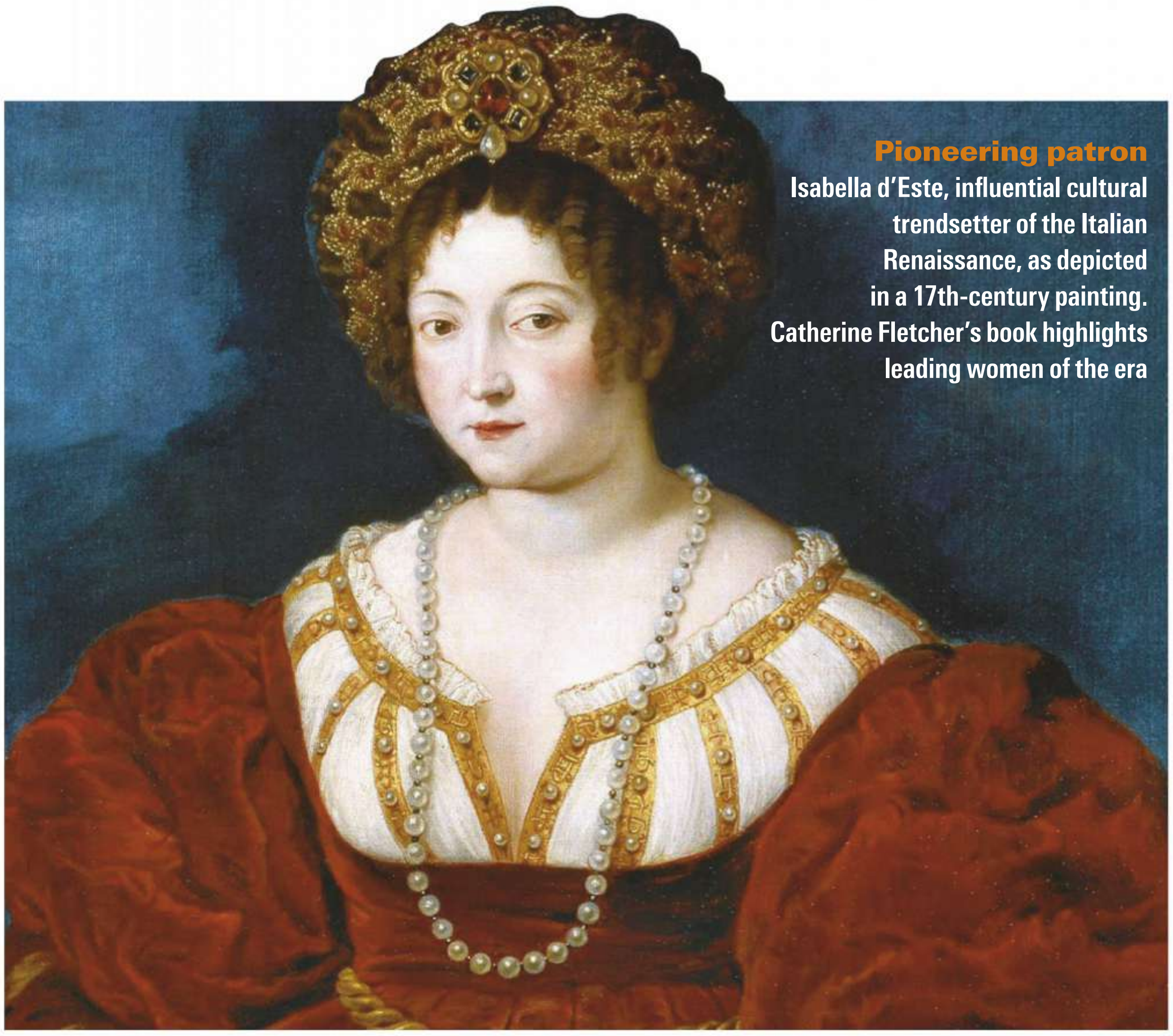
An age of ambivalence

JERRY BROTTON considers a new take on a seminal era of Italian history that intends to overturn the existing narrative – but which perhaps doesn't go far enough


CATHERINE FLETCHER
THE BEAUTY AND THE TERROR
AN ALTERNATIVE HISTORY OF THE ITALIAN RENAISSANCE

The Beauty and the Terror: An Alternative History of the Italian Renaissance
by Catherine Fletcher
Bodley Head, 432 pages, £25

In *The Third Man* (1949), Graham Greene's enigmatic anti-hero Harry Lime famously exclaimed that "in Italy, for 30 years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland, they had brotherly love, they had 500 years of democracy and peace – and what did that produce? The cuckoo clock." Tyranny, violence and warfare have always been understood as driving the artistic creativity of the European Renaissance ever since the term was first used by 19th-century intellectuals Jules Michelet and Jacob Burckhardt.



Pioneering patron
Isabella d'Este, influential cultural trendsetter of the Italian Renaissance, as depicted in a 17th-century painting. Catherine Fletcher's book highlights leading women of the era

It is therefore rather surprising to learn that Catherine Fletcher's book is billed as an "alternative history of the Italian Renaissance" that tries to revise the "focus on the genius and glory at the expense of the atrocities". This approach – of using 'history from below' to address individuals including women, workers, slaves and others – has been ongoing since the 1970s at least, and much (though not all) of it is acknowledged in Fletcher's footnotes.

The result is a book that cannot quite decide whether it is offering a polemic 'decolonising' of the traditional ideal of the Renaissance, or a sketch of events that took place in the Italian peninsula between 1492 and 1571. Even this date range is up for debate. It leaves out all but eight years of the *Quattrocento*, or 15th century, and with it so much of the art, philosophy and politics that defines the Italian Renaissance. And it ends with the battle of Lepanto, by which time the power of the Italian peninsula had been decisively eclipsed.

Fletcher's impulse to acknowledge the stories and characters not usually associated with the Italian Renaissance is commendable, but if anything, her account does not go far enough. We hear stories of women as rulers, writers and courtesans, and the role of Venice's Jewish ghetto in financing Italian trade, the development of handguns and even pornography. Yet this material sits uneasily alongside what is otherwise a standard retelling of the elite grand narrative of emperors and popes, wars, treaties and great art. Despite being promised detailed accounts of sex workers, farmers and citizens who lived the Renaissance every day, they only appear in passing. Fletcher is understandably keen to point to the 'darker side' of the Renaissance (a phrase invented by Walter Mignolo 25 years ago but not mentioned by Fletcher, even in chapters on the impact of the New World discoveries), but the results are often mixed. The man she believes commissioned Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* was only "very likely" to have been a slave trader. Although the chapters on what is called "the battlefield of culture" show how patronage shaped much of the great art of the period, new light is rarely cast on Leonardo or Titian beyond a retelling of the bare outlines of their lives and careers.

> **We hear stories of women rulers, the role of Venice's Jewish ghetto in financing Italian trade, the development of handguns and even pornography**

Fletcher previously wrote a terrific book on Alessandro de' Medici, *The Black Prince of Florence*, but the subject and scale of this new book has sadly defeated her. She should not feel too bad: many of us have tried but failed to capture the ambivalent spirit of the Italian Renaissance. **H**

Jerry Brotton's books include *The Renaissance: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, 2006)

GETTY IMAGES

BBC

Collector's Edition

The Story of the Napoleonic Wars

FROM THE MAKERS OF BBC HiSTORY MAGAZINE

This new special edition explores the dramatic clashes and campaigns fought across Europe at the turn of the 19th century. Discover:

- How Napoleon seized power in Revolutionary France
- The chain of events leading to the Duke of Wellington's famous victory at Waterloo
- Why the Peninsular War proved so costly for the French
- How Lord Nelson masterminded Britain's naval triumph at the battle of Trafalgar
- The impact of the Napoleonic Wars across the globe – from India to Latin America

PLUS – subscribers to *BBC History Magazine* receive FREE UK postage on this special edition

BBC
FROM THE MAKERS OF BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE
Collector's Edition
The Story of the Napoleonic Wars
Wellington and Waterloo
Nelson's Trafalgar triumph
The Peninsular War
Revolutionary France
Napoleon's divisive legacy
BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE

ONLY
£9.99
INCLUDING FREE P&P*

NAPOLEON IS COMING

Find out how **Napoleon's threat of invasion** spread fear across Britain

Napoleon's 'Spanish ulcer'

Discover the major battles of the **Peninsular War** in Spain and Portugal

WATERLOO
10 moments that decided the campaign

Learn about the pivotal moments that led to Napoleon's defeat at **Waterloo**

Order online **www.buysubscriptions.com/napoleon**
or call us on **03330 162 138**+ and quote NAPOLEON PRINT 1

+ UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). Outside of free call packages call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open Monday to Friday 9am–5pm.
* Subscribers to *BBC History Magazine* receive FREE UK POSTAGE on this special edition. Prices including postage are: £11.49 for all non-subscribers, £12.99 for Europe and £13.49 for the Rest of World. All orders subject to availability. Please allow up to 21 days for delivery.

LABEL1 TELEVISION – RYAN MCNAMARA

WATCH

Travels in time and science

It's probably safe to say few viewers remember which team won *University Challenge* in 2017, but there's little doubt which competitors were the stars of the series: Bobby Seagull and Eric Monkman, rivals who became friends. The economics of broadcasting mean the geeky double act that's followed was probably inevitable, but no less welcome for that.

For their latest TV outing, the duo's focus is on the industrial revolution, the Victorian era and the scientific breakthroughs that have done so much to shape our world. The series begins in 1759, with the story of John Harrison's marine chronometer, the eventual winner of the £20,000 Longitude Prize. The duo use a pedalo to show how the invention transformed travel across the oceans by helping seamen to plot their locations.

The programme also looks at such innovations as Richard Arkwright's water frame, crucial to the development of the cotton industry; the first steam locomotive; and even an experiment from 1774 aimed at weighing Mother Earth.

The second of three episodes focuses on the early 19th century, when so much of Britain's industrial infrastructure was built. The final show ends in 1897 with the story of a modest glass tube that was responsible for the discovery of the electron, and in turn for the development of modern-day electronics.

Monkman & Seagull's Genius Adventures
BBC Two / Due to air on Monday 18 May

ENCOUNTERS

80 DIARY: LISTEN / WATCH / TASTE
By **Jonathan Wright**, **Matt Elton** and **Sam Nott**
85 RECOMMENDED History podcasts

Dapper double act
Monkman & Seagull's Genius Adventures sees the *University Challenge* duo set out to explore the innovations that shaped the 18th and 19th centuries – and the stories of their inventors

LISTEN

Mythology and sexism

She may be broadcasting from home rather than standing up in front of a live audience, but the rest of the format of Natalie Haynes' consistently excellent radio show on the ancient world is essentially unchanged. Every week, the writer and comedian selects a different figure from the dim and distant past to profile.

This time around, her focus is on female figures from Greek mythology, including the Amazons and their queen, Penthesilea; Eurydice, wife of Orpheus; and Penelope, clever and long-suffering partner of Odysseus. The series begins with Helen of Troy: what should we make of the manner in which her story has been told down the years?

Natalie Haynes Stands Up for the Classics
BBC Radio 4 / Due to air on Sunday 17 May

WATCH

Building a narrative

David Olusoga is in Bristol to chart the ups and downs of one house and its assorted occupants

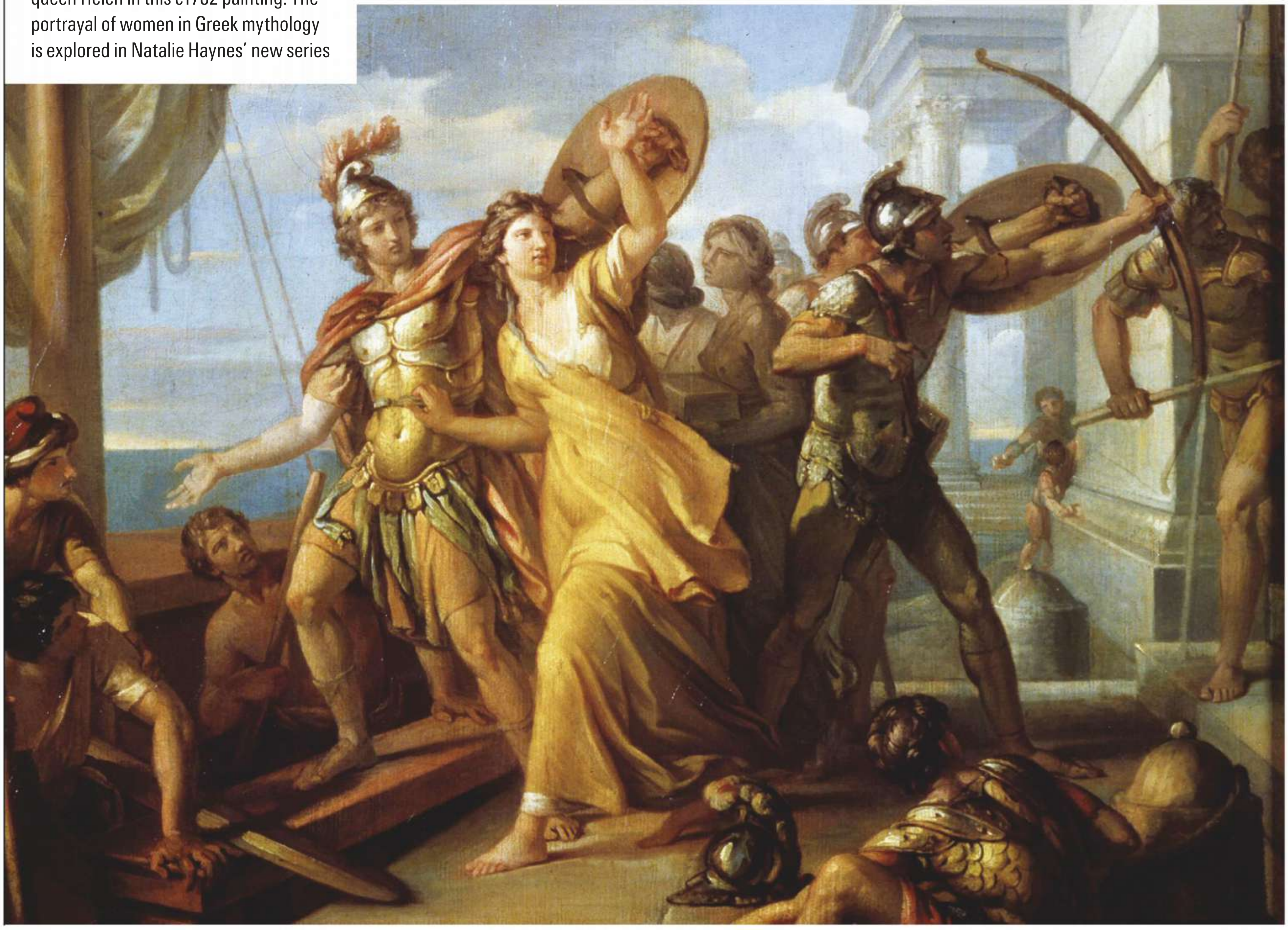
Tucked away behind blocks of flats in central Bristol, on a street close to the harbour, stands a row of houses dating back to the early 18th century. As the latest series of *A House Through Time* demonstrates while focusing on one of these terrace homes, it's a location with a rich history. It's often a troubling history, too, because this was a house built by a sea captain, Edmund Saunders, who made a small fortune from the slave trade.

Across four episodes, David Olusoga brings the story of the house's residents through the years up to the present day. It's a rich tale that takes in figures half lost to time, scandal and centuries of social change.

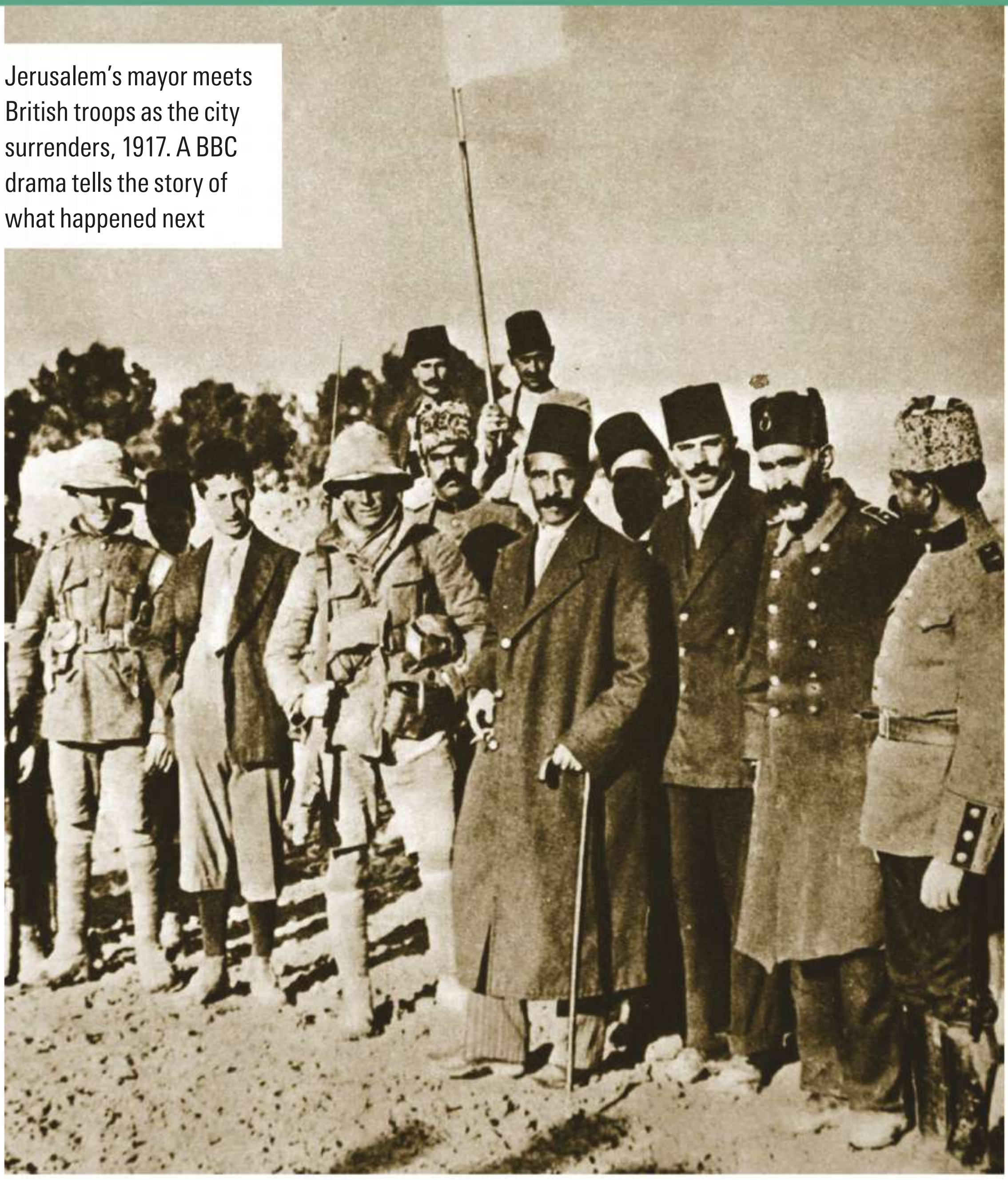
A House Through Time
BBC Two / Due to air in late May

» **Read David Olusoga's feature on Victorian slums on page 58 of this issue**

Trojan prince Paris abducts the Spartan queen Helen in this c1782 painting. The portrayal of women in Greek mythology is explored in Natalie Haynes' new series



GETTY IMAGES/ MARK BOURDILLON–BBC PICTURES



Jerusalem's mayor meets British troops as the city surrenders, 1917. A BBC drama tells the story of what happened next

LISTEN

In-between days

In 1917, the British government issued the Balfour declaration, which expressed support for the idea of "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people". In May 1948, Israel was established and the British Mandate to administer Palestine, enacted in the wake of the First World War, came to an end.

What was it like to live in Palestine in the years between these two events? If a new 10-part drama is anything to go by, the answer is 'tough and turbulent'. The series looks at the era through the eyes of two figures offering very different perspectives on events: Miriam Cohen, a Jewish refugee who emigrates to the region, and Youssef Bannourah, a Palestinian Arab and son of a local village leader.

For all their differences in background, the two have much in common: idealism, an optimism for the future tempered by the religious and political forces they encounter, and involvement in violent protest movements. Underlying the series is the question of whether the two can find a way to live in peace.

The series interweaves encounters with real-life historical figures into the drama, including Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion; the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Amin al-Husseini; and the influential American intellectual Rabbi Judah Magnes.

Miriam and Youssef
BBC World Service podcast / Available now

WEEKLY TV & RADIO
Visit *historyextra.com* for weekly updates on upcoming TV and radio programmes

GETTY IMAGES/PHOTO SCALA, FLORENCE–BPK/PHOTO SCALA, FLORENCE\BPK, BILDAGENTUR FUER KUNST, KULTUR UND GESCHICHTE, BERLIN

VIRTUAL TOUR

WATCH

Private view

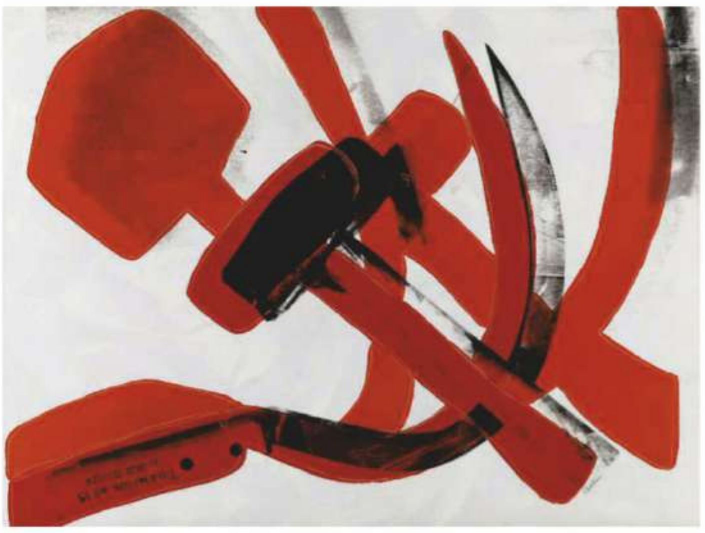
Physical visits to museums and galleries may not be possible during the ongoing coronavirus lockdown, but several institutions are offering the next best thing: online tours of their latest exhibitions.

Two such virtual experiences, both of which are curator-led and elegantly produced, come courtesy of the Tate's YouTube channel. The first, featuring 19th-century illustrator Aubrey Beardsley, charts the remarkable talent of a man who died at just 25. The second explores the forces that drove renowned pop artist Andy Warhol to create such striking work.

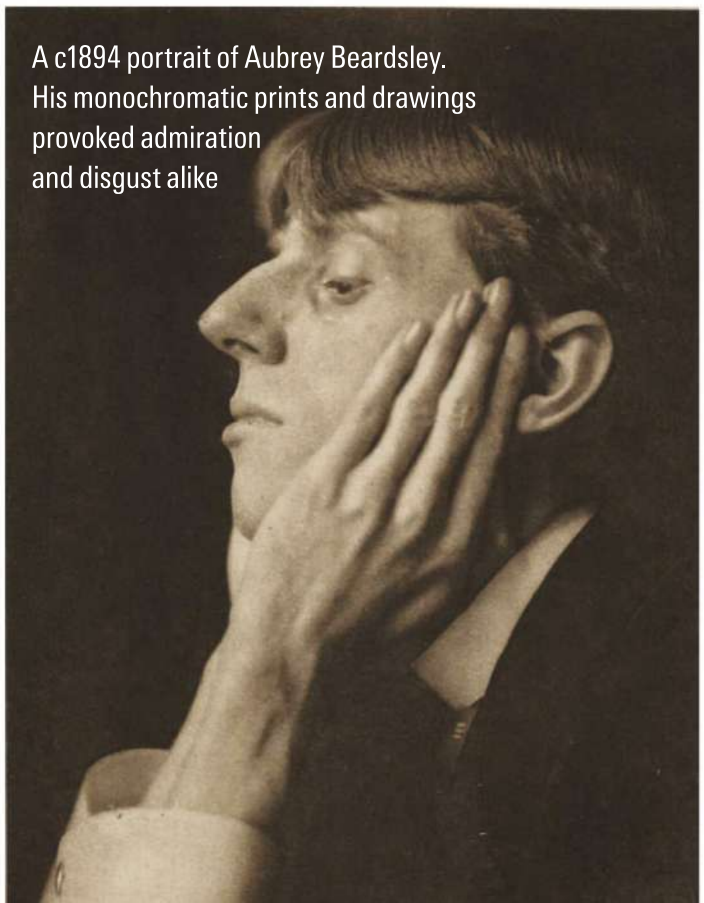
A more detailed glimpse at the Tate's Warhol exhibition is also available via the first instalment of the BBC's new *Museums in Quarantine* series, as critic and broadcaster Alastair Sooke gains special access behind its closed doors.

Tate YouTube channel
youtube.com/user/tate/videos

Museums in Quarantine
BBC Four / Available now via BBC iPlayer



Andy Warhol's 1976 work *Hammer and Sickle*. A new virtual tour reveals how his art was shaped by preoccupations with immigration, sexuality and death



A c1894 portrait of Aubrey Beardsley. His monochromatic prints and drawings provoked admiration and disgust alike

The origins of the rich 19th-century Bakewell Pudding still cause debate, 200 years on

TASTE

Bakewell Pudding

The Derbyshire town of Bakewell has lent its name to multiple dessert confections: a frangipane tart, and its cousin, this rich, easy-to-prepare pudding.

The precise origins of both, however, remain stubbornly shrouded in culinary mystery. Online sleuths suggest that the 1836 publication *The Magazine of Domestic Economy* may have featured the first known instance of a recipe for Bakewell Pudding, although people from the town itself believe the creation can be traced back earlier, to the 1820s.

In any case, by the mid-19th century, this sweet treat was celebrated both in Britain and in the US. The mix of almonds and jam remains a classic combination of flavours, belying its slightly ramshackle appearance.

Difficulty: 3/10 **Time:** 2 hrs 20min

INGREDIENTS

500g packet ready-made puff pastry
Good quality raspberry jam
110g unsalted butter
Extra butter for greasing
110g caster sugar
Five eggs
150g ground almonds
Almond essence
Icing sugar for dusting

METHOD

Preheat the oven to 190°C (170°C fan) / 375°F. Grease and flour a 23cm (nine-inch) loose-bottomed tart tin.

Roll out the pastry on to a lightly floured work surface to form a circle a few inches larger than the tin. Line the tin with the pastry, gently pressing into the edges. Trim the excess pastry from the edge of the tin.

Spread raspberry jam evenly over the pastry base.

In a large mixing bowl, cream together the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy and then gradually add the eggs, beating all the time. Stir in the ground almonds until they are well mixed.

Taste the mixture and add almond essence if you would prefer a stronger almond taste.

Pour the filling mixture into the pastry case and spread it evenly over the raspberry layer.

Bake the tart on the middle shelf of the oven for 35–40 minutes, or until the surface is golden brown. This can take up to an hour or more, depending on the oven.

Dust the top of the pudding with icing sugar and serve.

Recipe from bbcgoodfood.com. Thanks to Ivan Day at Food History Jottings: foodhistorjottings.blogspot.com

A New York street cleaner wearing a face mask, 1918. A new series compares that year's Spanish flu epidemic and the current crisis

SAMANTHA NOTT/GETTY IMAGES

LISTEN

Lessons from the flu

Long before Covid-19 began to spread across the world, virologist Professor John Oxford warned of the need to plan for a pandemic. It was an insight based in part on his study of the 1918–19 Spanish flu outbreak, estimated to have claimed the lives of 50 million people around the world – 10 per cent of those who were infected. In Great Britain and Ireland alone, 228,000 people died.

Oxford argues that there are huge parallels between the situation at the end of the First World War and today, and his new series sets out to explore them. The first of three episodes looks at the spread of Spanish flu, which came in three waves. The second outbreak, in the autumn of 1918, was made more severe by crowds of people gathering for Armistice celebrations.

The second programme looks at how communities and authorities reacted to the arrival of the disease. In Manchester, medical officer Dr James Niven, a social-distancing pioneer, recommended schools and cinemas be closed, a move that undoubtedly saved lives.

Finally, the series considers the long-term impact of the flu on health and healthcare provision, communities, the economy and governments. These were often profound. In a single region of Africa it created 900,000 orphans in just four weeks.

Pandemic 1918
BBC Radio 4 / Due to air from 15 May

BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE RECOMMENDS

History podcasts to binge on

In the first of a new series looking at the best historical entertainment to enjoy during lockdown, we nominate some of our favourite podcasts. Episodes are available from multiple podcast providers

History Extra

Our own History Extra podcast was one of the first to enter the fray back in July 2007 with an in-depth interview with Sir Ian Kershaw. Since then we've released more than 700 episodes in which a broad array of historians have explored a vast range of historical topics. New episodes are currently being released four times a week, with recent guests including the likes of Saul David, Mary Beard, Priyamvada Gopal and Marc Morris. Our new Sunday episode format, launched in April, sees experts answering your queries on a variety of historical subjects, from D-Day to Roman Britain. You can listen to these, and the entire 13-year archive, at *historyextra.com/podcast*
Rob Attar *Editor*

HistoryExtra
HistoryExtra
HistoryExtra
HistoryExtra
HistoryExtra
HistoryExtra
HistoryExtra
HistoryExtra

FRAN MONKS

Evil Genius

An accessible and funny look at historical figures, which originally appeared on BBC Radio 4. Comedian Russell Kane (accompanied by a panel) presents each half-hour episode, which consider facts about people such as Mahatma Gandhi, Evelyn Waugh, Muhammad Ali and Queen Victoria. The show's undeniably unsubtle format weighs up whether they are more 'genius' or 'evil'. It's definitely irreverent, with strong language – some might well prefer Radio 4's *Great Lives* – but it's a light-hearted listen that offers a brief window into complicated legacies.
Elinor Evans *Deputy digital editor*

You Must Remember This

This podcast dedicated to the forgotten and secret histories of Hollywood's first century is perfect for fans of classic film. Created by US film critic and journalist Karina Longworth, the archive of more than 150 episodes delves into Hollywood stories such as the unknown sides of Katharine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart to the many loves of Howard Hughes. The excellent 16-episode miniseries exploring the anti-communist blacklist of the mid-20th century, in particular, is not to be missed. **EE**

Stuff You Should Know

Imagine a topic, any topic – fractals, halitosis, bidets – and there's probably a *Stuff You Should Know* episode on it. The premise is simple: two guys – HowStuffWorks writers Josh Clark and Chuck Bryant – sit in a studio and chew the fat on a mind-boggling range of subjects. With more than 1,400 episodes in the back catalogue, there's plenty of material on history. Unpretentious and endlessly curious, Bryant and Clark will teach you something without you even realising it.
Ellie Cawthorne *Section editor*

You're Dead To Me

With the tag line, 'The history podcast for people who don't like history... and those who do', Greg Jenner's BBC podcast series has been a huge success. Each episode sees the author and broadcaster guide guests through a diverse array of subjects – Joan of Arc, the Aztecs, chocolate – with plenty of references to books, TV and film along the way. The blend of experts and comedians creates a fact-packed, accessible listen – and, if you enjoy the archive episodes, his new *Homeschool History* series is also worth a try.
Rachel Dickens *Senior deputy art editor*

You're Dead to Me presenter Greg Jenner is also behind the BBC's new *Homeschool History* series

Tunnel 29

In October 1961, Joachim Rudolph embarked on a perilous project: digging a tunnel under the Berlin Wall. But unlike most of those fleeing Soviet-controlled East Germany, he was heading in the opposite direction in order to construct an escape route for refugees. Presented by journalist and broadcaster Helena Merriman, this BBC Radio 4 podcast reconstructs Joachim's unenviable mission, transporting listeners into the dark, dank tunnel he excavated right under the noses (and feet) of East Germany's secret police. Compelling, claustrophobic stuff. **EC**

it's a gentlemen's watch

Time for the **country.**

WAGSTAFF WATCHES

WAGSTAFF

At Wagstaff watches we make no nonsense precision timepieces for those who love the country.

A family business from Yorkshire producing watches in a fine tradition at sensible prices.

Wagstaff watches are proud to support country traditions and skills and a percentage of every sale goes to support country pursuits, skills apprenticeships and helps to keep the countryside thriving.

£95

www.wagstaffwatches.co.uk

FREE SHIPPING

wagstaffwatches wagstaff_watches wagstaffwatches

YOUR ANCESTORS LIVED EXTRAORDINARY LIVES

How do we know?

Because if they hadn't, you would not be here today, reading this advert. You exist because of the resilience of hundreds of fascinating men and women who persevered through war, plagues, famines and the trials of everyday life.

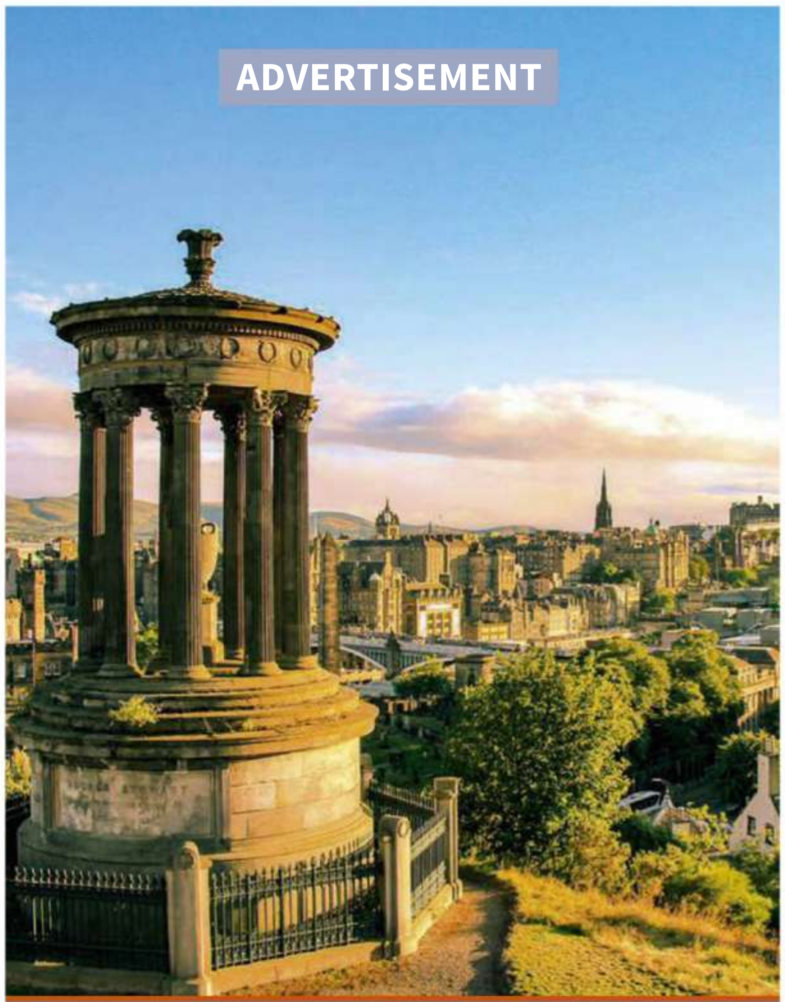
Wouldn't you love to know their stories?

We would love to help.

Visit our website to learn more:
www.qualifiedgenealogists.org/LearnMore

Everyone has a story.

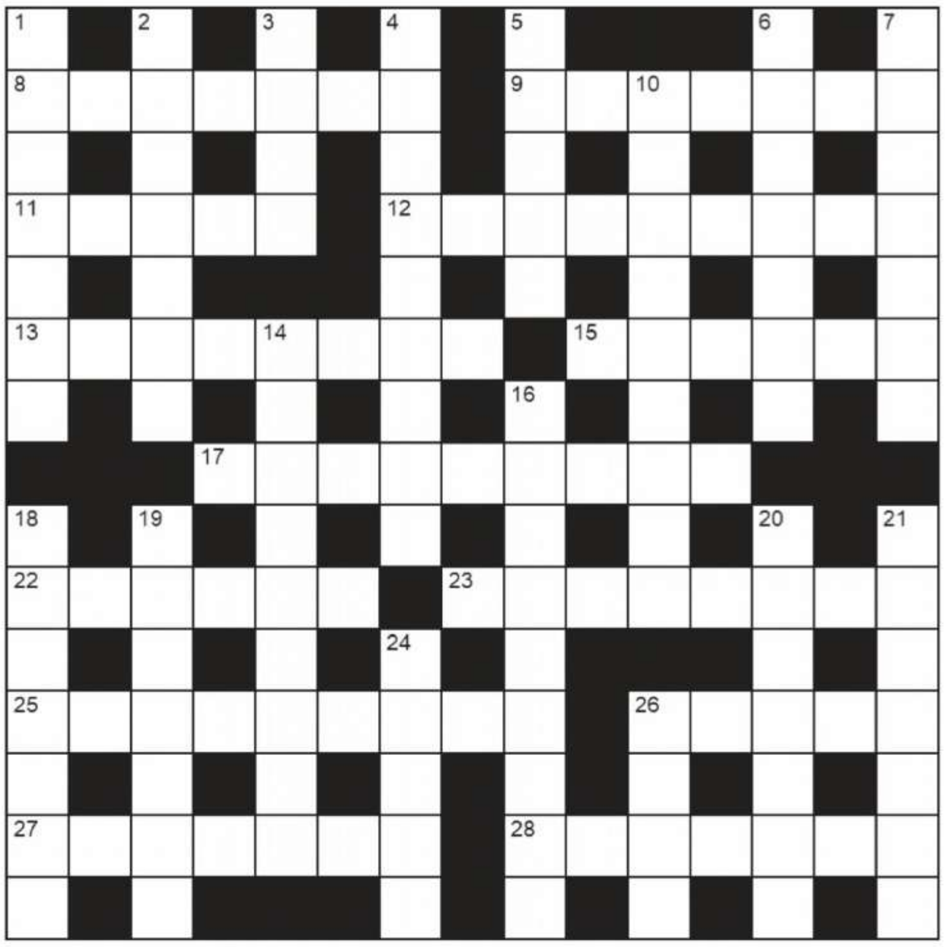
REGISTER of
QUALIFIED GENEALOGISTS



For more ideas to help plan your historic day out check out the Directory at

www.historyextra.com/directory

PRIZE CROSSWORD



Across

8 Means by which west Berlin was supplied with food and other vital items during the city's blockade by the USSR in 1948–49 (3,4)

9 One of the 14th-century followers of the unorthodox Oxford theologian John Wycliffe (7)

11 Impressive ___ ruins can be found at Pula, Croatia and Aspendus, Turkey (5)

12 Politicians committed to preserving the link between Northern Ireland and the crown and constitution of the UK (9)

13/22 Founder of the last shogunate of Japan, which lasted from 1603 to 1867 (8,6)

15 Daughter of Herodias and Herod II, who, according to the Bible, demanded the execution of a Jewish prophet (6)

17 ___ Maria, French wife of King Charles I of England (9)

22 See 13 across

23 First name of the 19th-century social reformer who is regarded as the founder of modern nursing (8)

25 Magnificent court museum, founded in 1764 by Catherine the Great (9)

26 The traditional name ('Loiners') for natives of this English city is of uncertain origin (5)

27 Probably the most famous are those first discovered in 1947 in the Qumran caves in the Judaean Desert (7)

28 One of the organised wreckers of textile machinery in 19th-century England (7)

Down

1 Elizabeth ___, popular and influential Victorian poet, known for her love affair and secret marriage to another poet (7)

2 Soviet foreign minister from 1957–85, called 'Mr Nyet' as a result of his frequent use of veto in the UN security council (7)

3/26 down Nickname first applied to a certain British politician by the Soviet Union in 1976 (4,4)

4 Conflicts that resulted in treaties (1842 and 1860) forcing China to concede territorial and sovereignty rights to western powers (5,4)

5 Classical Greek sculptures named after the 7th Earl of ___ who removed them to England in the early 19th century (5)

6 English popular historian who co-presented the 2004 BBC TV series *Battlefield Britain* (3,4)

7 Homer is generally credited with authoring this epic work (7)

10 The 1612 trial of the 'Pendle Witches' was held in this English county town (9)

14 The Jacobite Rising of 1719, aided by Spain, was quickly aborted at the battle of ___ in the West Scottish Highlands (9)

16 Pseudonym of the US investigative journalist, whose book *Around the World in Seventy-Two Days* made her a great popular success (6,3)

18 A major religion of India founded in the Punjab in the late 15th century (7)

19 First president of Tanzania and author of the influential paper 'Ujamaa – The Basis of African Socialism' (7)

20 Relating to the royal house that started with Henry II of England (7)

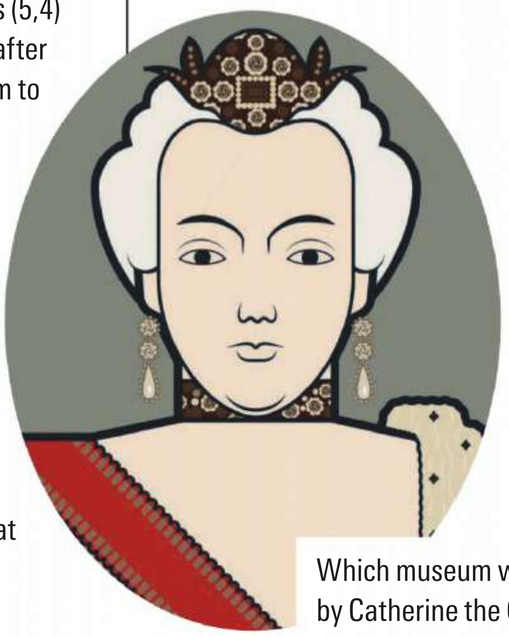
21 German-born British art historian, who produced the 46-volume work *The Buildings of England* (1951–74) (7)

24 Language that is descended from old Persian (5)

26 See 3 down

……

Compiled by **Eddie James**



Which museum was founded by Catherine the Great in 1764? *(see 25 across)*

ANDY TUOHY

JULIAN THOMPSON
VICTORY IN EUROPE
1944–1945

Book worth **£20** for **8 winners**

Victory in Europe

From D-Day to the Destruction of the Third Reich, 1944–1945

By Julian Thompson

This graphic account of the final 11 months of the Third Reich uses maps, diaries, posters, letters and secret memos to recount how the Allies stormed Nazi-occupied Europe. Written by a visiting professor of war studies at King's College London, it's endorsed by the Imperial War Museum to mark the 75th anniversary of victory in Europe.

HOW TO ENTER

● Open to residents of the UK (inc Channel Islands). Post entries to ***BBC History Magazine*, June 2020 Crossword, PO Box 501, Leicester LE94 0AA** or email them to ***june2020@historycomps.co.uk*** by 5pm on **10 June 2020**. ● Entrants must supply full name, address and phone number. The winners will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. Winners' names will appear in the August 2020 issue. By entering, participants agree to be bound by the terms and conditions shown in full in the box below. Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will use personal details in accordance with the Immediate Privacy Policy at *immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy-policy/privacy/* ● Immediate Media Company Ltd (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) would love to send you newsletters, together with special offers and other promotions. If you would not like to receive these, please write 'NO INFO' on your entry. ● Branded BBC titles are licensed from or published jointly with BBC Studios (the commercial arm of the BBC). Please tick here ☐ if you'd like to receive regular newsletters, special offers and promotions from BBC Studios by email. Your information will be handled in accordance with the BBC Studios privacy policy: *bbcstudios.com/privacy. – bbc.com/editorialguidelines/guidance/code-of-conduct*

Solution to our April 2020 crossword

Across 1 Grog 4 Heraldry 9 Action 10 Maximian 11 Fleming 13 Munich 14/20 Nell Gwyn 16 Thutmose 19 Calendar 22 Sparta 24 Megalith 26 Mount Tai 28 Gowrie 29 Beer hall 30/6 Rosa Luxemburg.

Down 2 Recife 3 Guinevere 4 Hanoi 5 Ram 7 Roman 8 Fascism 12 Guthrum 15 Lady Astor 17 Mayflower 18 Campion 21 Atkins 23 Ranke 25 Gogol 27 IRA.

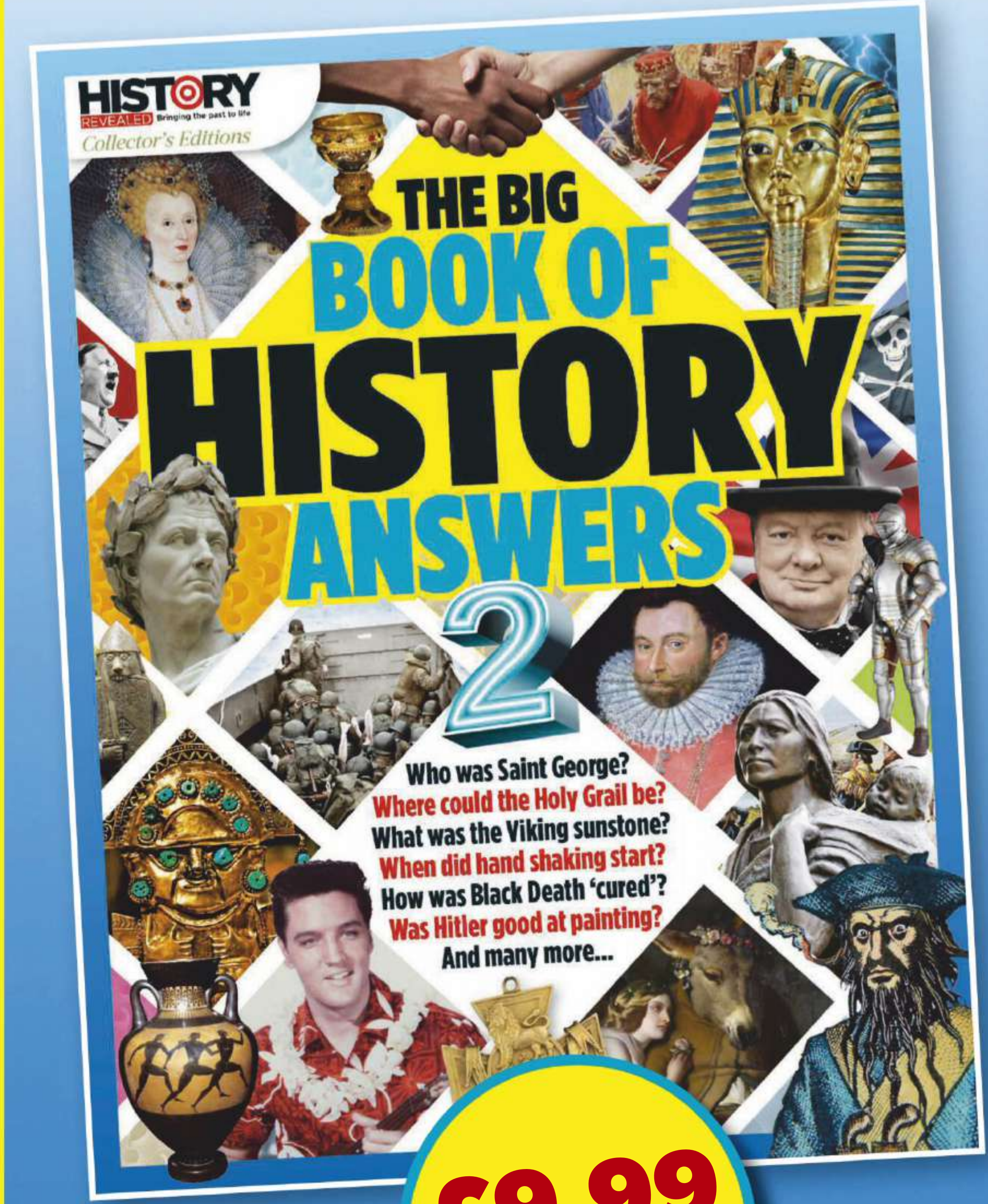
Six winners of *Victory in the Kitchen*

R Foster, Rutland; D Reid, Kent; A Wilson, Greater Manchester; M Docherty, London; R Beckett, London; O Thomas, Sir Gaerfyrddin

CROSSWORD COMPETITION TERMS & CONDITIONS

● The crossword competition is open to all residents of the UK (inc Channel Islands), aged 18 or over, except Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited employees or contractors, and anyone connected with the competition or their direct family members. By entering, participants agree to be bound by these terms and conditions and that their name and county may be released if they win. Only one entry permitted per person. ● The closing date and time is as shown under How to Enter, above. Entries received after that will not be considered. Entries cannot be returned. Entrants must supply full name, address and daytime phone number. Immediate Media Company (publishers of *BBC History Magazine*) will not publish your personal details or provide them to anyone without permission. Read more about the Immediate Privacy Policy at *immediatemedia.co.uk/privacy policy/* ● The winning entrants will be the first correct entries drawn at random after the closing time. The prize and number of winners will be as shown on the Crossword page. There is no cash alternative and the prize will not be transferable. Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited's decision is final and no correspondence relating to the competition will be entered into. The winners will be notified by post within 20 days of the close of the competition. The name and county of residence of the winners will be published in the magazine within two months of the closing date. If the winner is unable to be contacted within one month of the closing date, Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited reserves the right to offer the prize to a runner up. ● Immediate Media Company Bristol Limited reserves the right to amend these terms and conditions, or to cancel, alter or amend the promotion at any stage, if deemed necessary in its opinion, or if circumstances arise outside of its control. The promotion is subject to the laws of England.

From the makers of BBC HISTORY REVEALED


HISTORY REVEALED Bringing the past to life
Collector's Editions
THE BIG BOOK OF HISTORY ANSWERS 2
Who was Saint George?
Where could the Holy Grail be?
What was the Viking sunstone?
When did hand shaking start?
How was Black Death 'cured'?
Was Hitler good at painting?
And many more...

THE BIG BOOK OF HISTORY ANSWERS 2

What is the earliest-known photograph?
Was tarring and feathering fatal?
How big was Henry VIII's codpiece?
The answers to these questions, plus many more, can be found in the pages of this special Q&A compendium from the makers of *BBC History Revealed*

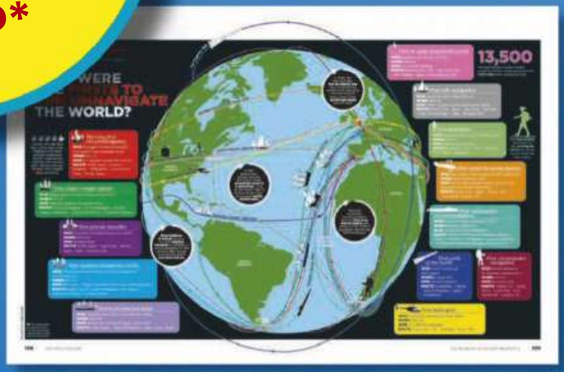
INSIDE YOU WILL FIND

- Hundreds of questions answered by our panel of brainiacs
- Rare historical photographs and images of artefacts
- Fun facts, titbits and curios from history

PLUS subscribers to *BBC History Magazine* receive FREE UK postage on this special edition!

£9.99 INC FREE P&P*

ALL HISTORY – Ten chapters jam-packed with Q&As, spanning ancient to modern times



ROUND THE WORLD – infographics go into greater detail, including the history of circumnavigations

TOP TENS – Biggest blunders, luckiest people and not forgetting famous bears (to name a few)

ORDER ONLINE

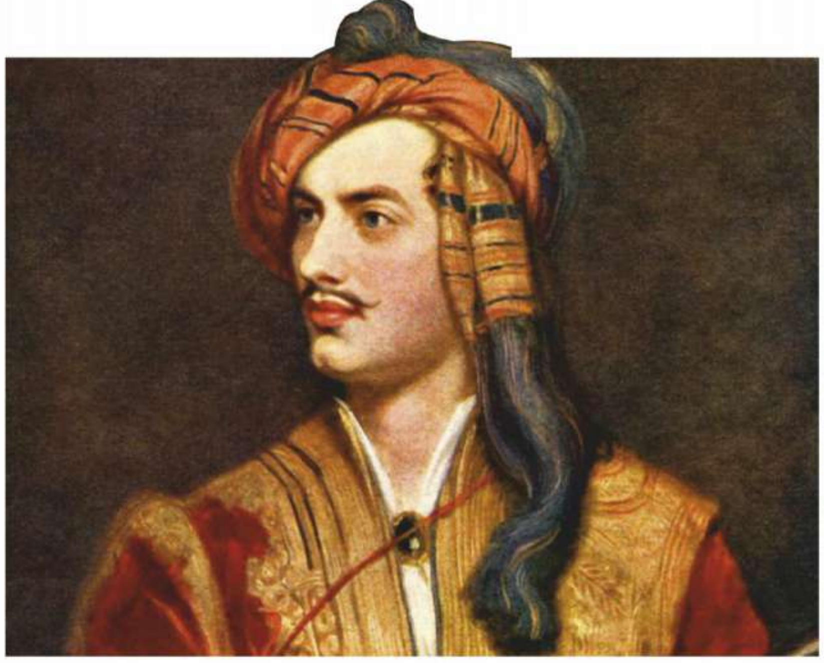
www.buysubscriptions.com/Answers20

OR CALL US ON 03330 162 138† QUOTE CODE HISTORY ANSWERS 2020 PRINT 1

†UK calls will cost the same as other standard fixed line numbers (starting 01 or 02) and are included as part of any inclusive or free minutes allowances (if offered by your phone tariff). Outside of free call packages call charges from mobile phones will cost between 3p and 55p per minute. Lines are open Mon to Fri 9am–5pm.
* Subscribers to *BBC History Magazine* receive FREE UK POSTAGE on this special edition. Prices including postage are: £11.49 for all non-subscribers, £12.99 for Europe and £13.49 for the Rest of World.
All orders subject to availability. Please allow up to 21 days for delivery.

MORE FROM US

A selection of the exciting content on our website **historyextra.com**



Scandalous sex lives of the Byrons

Lord Byron has gone down in history for being "mad, bad and dangerous to know". But his ancestors were hardly paragons of virtue either, writes Emily Brand, whose new book explores three generations of Georgian debauchery. She shares a few of the notorious scandals – from shipwrecks to incest.
historyextra.com/scandalous-byrons

The Norman conquest

Why did William the Conqueror win the battle of Hastings? Why is the battle called that, when it was fought somewhere else? And how did Harold II really die? In a recent podcast interview with Marc Morris, we went back to basics on the Norman conquest.
historyextra.com/total-normans

The real history behind *Mrs America*

As the new TV drama *Mrs America* revisits the 1970s fight to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment – and Phyllis Schlafly's movement against it – historian Kimberly A Hamlin explores the debate about the ERA that still rages on today.
historyextra.com/mrs-america

A brief history of Bergen-Belsen

It's 75 years since Bergen-Belsen was liberated. Some 52,000 prisoners from across Europe died here during the Holocaust, including the diarist Anne Frank. Jens-Christian Wagner reveals what life was like inside the camp.
historyextra.com/bergen-belsen-75

GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY/FOX-GETTY IMAGES

NEXT MONTH

July issue on sale 11 June 2020

The forgotten war

On the 70th anniversary of the Korean War, Grace Huxford considers how the conflict played out back in Britain

Who's holding the baby?

Helen McCarthy traces the history of childcare over the past 200 years

Henry III in his own words

David Carpenter on a rare chance to glimpse the thoughts and motivations of a medieval king

Dickens on campaign

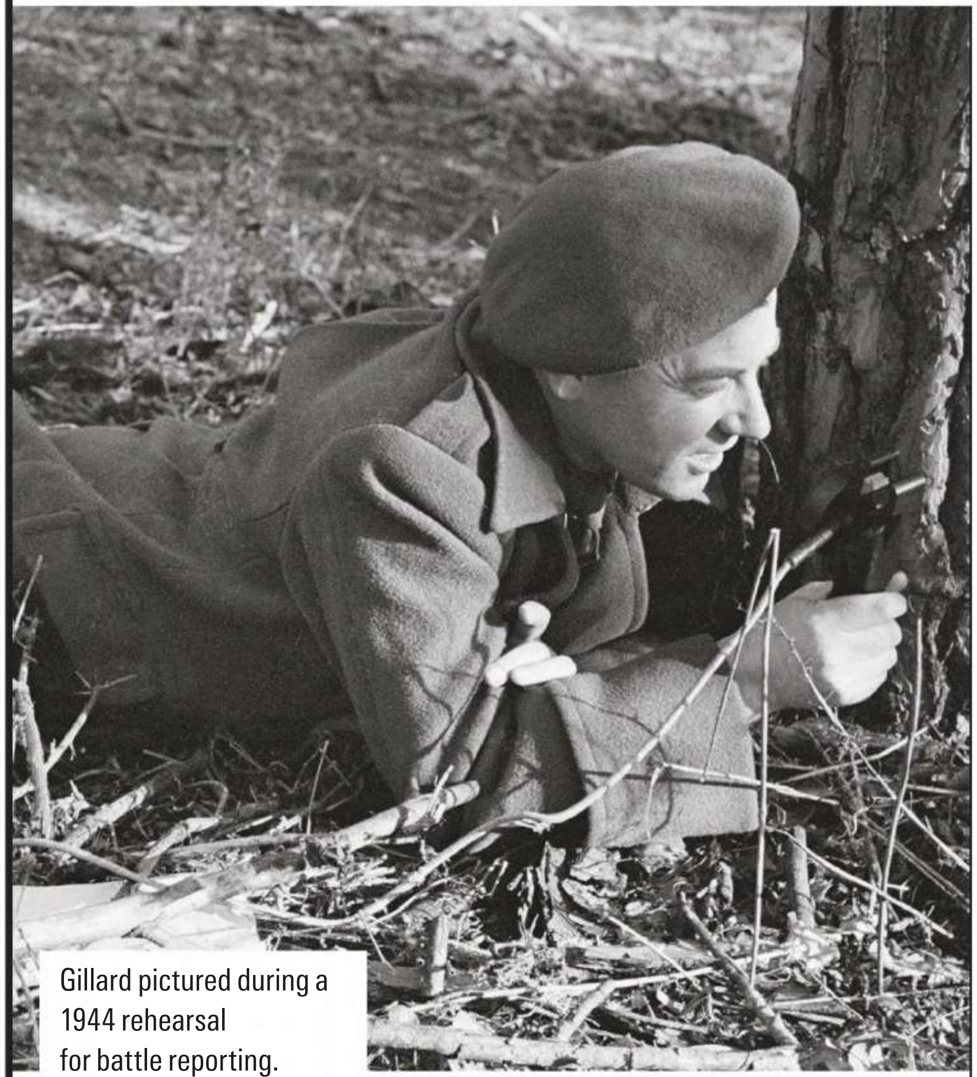
Rosalind Crone describes the author's attempts to transform Victorian society

***Chris Mason**, host of Radio 4's Any Questions?, chooses*

Frank Gillard

1908–98

Chris Mason started working at the BBC in 2002, where he has been a political correspondent since 2012. He is also the presenter of Radio 4's *Any Questions?* .



Gillard pictured during a 1944 rehearsal for battle reporting. He filed dispatches for the BBC throughout the Second World War

IN PROFILE

Frank Gillard was a BBC reporter, executive and radio innovator, who served as a war correspondent in the Second World War. In 1948 he dreamt up *Any Questions?* which began life on the West of England Home Service. He was later made the BBC's director of radio, reorganising BBC Radio into four stations, and in 1967 set up the first local BBC radio stations. The annual Frank Gillard awards, which recognise achievement in local BBC radio, were launched in 2000 in his honour.

> " Gillard's radio dispatches would appear within 24 hours, which was pretty much instantaneous for the period "

When did you first hear about Gillard? When I was working in BBC local radio years ago, I learnt about the radio awards named after him and was curious to learn more. I discovered that not only had he been a distinguished war correspondent during the Second World War, but that he was also a visionary BBC manager and creator of topical discussion show *Any Questions?*. He played an important role in creating BBC Radio as we know it today.

What kind of person was he? He was a man with a great hinterland, which gave him the rare capacity to both report from the 'coalface' and manage a complex organisation such as BBC Radio. It's unusual to find someone who has operated at such a senior level in two very different areas in the broadcasting world.

What made Gillard a hero? He was a correspondent on the frontline at a time of national crisis for Britain, but he tried to do it in a way that was thoughtful and detached. Gillard also had to battle with the technological challenges of the time: his radio dispatches would appear within 24 hours, which was pretty much instantaneous for the period. Plus, he had the foresight and vision to set up BBC local radio, to reorganise the national network, and to create a programme that was able to move with the times and stay relevant.

What was his finest hour? It's got to be inventing *Any Questions?* – although as its current host, I was bound to say that! But to dream up the format that's still going strong 70 years later is quite something – and it's been copied and adapted all over the world, too. When Gillard started the series in the late 1940s, he spoke of wanting to create "a programme that would deal with serious subjects but wasn't solemn", and that's what I try to do today. The language used, and the voices and accents heard, might be different, as are some of the questions: in one old show someone asked a question about the role of spinsters in society! But it hasn't changed that much, which is part of the reason for its longevity.

Can you see any parallels between Gillard's life and your own? Only that, as he did, I've spent nearly all of my professional life at the BBC. When I present *Any Questions?*, I'm very aware that I'm standing on the shoulders of giants such as Gillard.

What do you think he would have made of the show's new presenter? I think he would ask: "Who's this upstart?!"

If you could meet Gillard, what would you ask him? I'd play him the latest episode of *Any Questions?* and ask him to give me an honest, unvarnished assessment!

Chris Mason was talking to York Membery

LISTEN AGAIN

In Radio 4's **Great Lives**, guests choose inspirational figures: *bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qxsb*

GETTY IMAGES/BBC

BY APPOINTMENT TO
HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN
PHILATELISTS
STANLEY GIBBONS LTD
LONDON

STANLEY GIBBONS

THE HOME OF STAMP COLLECTING

POSTAGE
Q ONE PENNY I
Q ONE PENNY J
Q ONE PENNY K
Q ONE PENNY L
R ONE PENNY I
R ONE PENNY J
R ONE PENNY K
R ONE PENNY L

The world's first adhesive postage stamp was born from frustration with an inefficient postal system. Until 1837, sending a letter was an expensive and complicated task. Like any other transaction, payment was received at the end but this meant it was the recipient who was left to settle the bill.

Rowland Hill, a schoolmaster, was so moved by the inefficiency of the process that he took it upon himself to revolutionise communication forever. Hill published a pamphlet, Post office reform; Its importance and practicability, in which he made a case for a big change. He argued that the new system should require a cheap, flat-rate which would be prepaid when posted.

After months of lobbying, Hill's idea took shape in the world's first postage stamp.

Design

POSTAGE
T ONE PENNY A
1
PRICE 1d Per L

The very process of designing the Penny Black is a fascinating area of collecting. It began with an open competition inviting designers and engravers to envision an image that would prevent forgery and reuse. Around 2,600 entries were received but only four ideas from Treasury Competition Essays of 1839 were chosen and its designers were awarded £100 each.

While elements from the winning designs were incorporated into the final portrait of Queen Victoria, Rowland Hill ultimately based the winning design on a medal engraving created by William Wyon of the monarch when she was only 15-years-old.

The image was printed by Perkins Bacon in sheets of 240 stamps with that required scissors to be cut from the sheet. The stamps featured a white-line machine engraved background and a simple crown watermark for forgery prevention. The image was used on all stamps for the entirety of her reign.

To see our full range of Penny Blacks visit www.stanleygibbons.com/PennyBlack

STANLEY GIBBONS | 399 Strand | London | WC2R 0LX
www.stanleygibbons.com

@StanleyGibbons /StanleyGibbonsGroup @StanleyGibbons

WINNER OF
7 BAFTA® AWARDS | 3 ACADEMY AWARDS®

★★★★★ THE GUARDIAN
★★★★★ THE TIMES
★★★★★ DAILY MAIL
★★★★★ METRO

"UNMISSABLE"
METRO

★★★★★ DEN OF GEEK
★★★★★ TIME OUT
★★★★★ DIGITAL SPY

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SKYFALL

AVAILABLE TO
DOWNLOAD & KEEP
AND TO OWN ON BLU-RAY™ & DVD

AVAILABLE AT
amazon.co.uk

BUY/RENT ON
prime video

DreamWorks Pictures NEW REPUBLIC eOne © 2020 Storyteller Distribution Co., LLC.

Amazon, the Amazon logo and Amazon.co.uk are registered trademarks of Amazon EU SARL or its affiliates.